

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's Real Newspaper

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BROOKLYN HEIGHTS-DOWNTOWN EDITION
INCLUDING DUMBO

DTZ/16 pages • Vol. 30, No. 1 • Saturday, Jan. 6, 2007 • FREE



Pete Hamill

BOOK MARK

Dine with famous authors at BAM

By Karen Butler
for The Brooklyn Paper

Want to help Pete Hamill write his next novel? Ask him a lot of questions.

Hamill, who is one of nine authors participating in this year's popular "Eat, Drink & Be Literary" series at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, said he likes being at such events because a smart audience makes him a better writer.

"A question asked might suggest to me, and [then] forces me to ponder the answer," Hamill told *GO Brooklyn*. "If not immediately, then later, in the dark, after midnight."

Hamill — whose journalistic career includes editing stints at the *Daily News*, *New York Post* and *New York*, and whose less-creative pursuits include the memoir "A Drinking Life" and the novels "Snow in August" and "The Deadly Piece" — will headline the Jan. 25 event.

See **LIT FEST** on page 10

KNOW YOUR SIGN

The Paper reveals Bridge path marker

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

The mystery of the surreptitious sign-maker has been solved!

Okay, so it's not exactly the Bermuda Triangle enigma, but for years, many Brooklyn Heights residents have wondered about the unknown person who had been secretly hanging hand-painted wooden signs in Cadman Plaza Park to guide visitors to the famed, but impossible-to-find, Brooklyn Bridge pedestrian pathway.

And now, at long last, The Brooklyn Paper has found out who she is: Roslyn Beck.

We'd like to say we discovered Beck through diligent, boot-leather reporting. But in reality, she was generous enough to write us a letter — a letter! — after we mentioned her then-anonymous handwork in an article last month.

That story was about a plan to install 110 signs throughout Downtown that will lead tourists to many attractions, including the footpath. The signs, to be installed, will be in the in-

See **PATH** on page 12



MYSTERY SOLVED: Roslyn Beck is the lady behind those handmade signs pointing confused tourists to the Brooklyn Bridge footpath.



RESOLUTION REVOLUTION

Pol and people mark new year with 2007 plans

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Resolutions. Everyone makes 'em, everyone breaks 'em. But we at The Brooklyn Paper feel that, as journalists, it's our job to hold these people accountable. So, for the first time ever, we've compiled the resolutions of some of our best-loved local celebrities — and promise (resolve, you might say) to follow up at the end of the year to see if they kept their vows.

Mike Bloomberg, Mayor

By all accounts, 2006 was one of the best years New York has ever had. But my personal resolution is to make 2007 even better.

Bill DeBlasio, Councilman, Park Slope

Protect children in the shelter system by continuing intense oversight of the agencies handling child welfare; enroll a large percentage of the more than 500,000 New Yorkers who are eligible for food stamps but are not currently enrolled; pass electronic waste legislation, which makes manufacturers responsible for disposing of toxic waste in a way that does not pollute our environment or pose health hazards.

Sandi Franklin, Executive Director, Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment
Dim your lights. Use less energy. Shine less. Drive less. Buy local.

Vincent Gentile, Councilman, Bay Ridge

To lose more weight than [Borough President] Mary Markowitz, grow taller than [City Councilman] Bill DeBlasio, and to win by a larger margin than [Sen.] Chuck Schumer.

Marty Golden, state Senator, Bay Ridge

We will be successful in keeping Viceroy Memorial Hospital an acute care facility. We will see the expansion of local schools by building extensions and additional classrooms. We will target and eliminate wasteful Medicaid fraud in New York State. We will adopt legislation that will lower the cost of health care.

See **RESOLUTION** on page 6



Bloomberg



James



Golden



Franklin



Gentile



Golden



Markowitz



DeBlasio



Schumer



DeBlasio



Gentile



Golden



Markowitz



DeBlasio



Schumer

BROOKLYN'S REAL NEWSPAPERS

The Brooklyn Paper
Including Brooklyn Heights Paper, Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, Downtown News, Fort Greene-Clinton Hill Paper and the DUMBO Paper

WE'RE ALL BROOKLYN PAPER NOW

Here it is, folks: The new Brooklyn Paper!

What was wrong with the old Brooklyn Paper, you ask? Nothing — but a little tinkering with our banner will help us unify all of our editions under one great name.

So while you continue to enjoy The Brooklyn Paper (with a new logo), readers of our Park Slope Paper will now devour The Brooklyn Paper/Park Slope Edition, and Bay Ridge readers will get The Brooklyn Paper/Bay Ridge Edition.

Other neighborhoods will have their own editions, too.

This week's changes are more than skin deep, and there's more to come.

On page 2, we'll tell you "Where to GO" in a revamped calendar of events section that features a new civic calendar and a list of editors' picks for the best of the borough's arts and entertainment offerings.

Over the next few weeks, you'll find expanded coverage of your neighborhood, new columnists, wider arts coverage and innovative Web features — all compiled by the same Brooklyn-based staff you've come to know and love since this award-winning, family-owned newspaper began covering the borough's arts and entertainment offerings.

The Park Slope Paper
Including the Boro Park Edition and the Boro Park Edition

The Bay Ridge Paper
Including the Boro Park Edition

ough in 1978.

As always, we look forward to your feedback. No, really — our phone numbers are right there on page 2 (plus, you can always e-mail our writers and editors by using their last name, followed by @BrooklynPaper.com).

A new year, a new look, but the same great Brooklyn Paper.

INSIDE

WHERE TO GO

EDITOR'S PICKS

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Birthday bounty Celebrate the birthdays of the famous and the infamous with a special discount on birthday cakes at the Brooklyn Museum.	Art walk Explore the art scene in the heart of Brooklyn with a guided tour of the Brooklyn Museum.	Art walk Explore the art scene in the heart of Brooklyn with a guided tour of the Brooklyn Museum.	Art walk Explore the art scene in the heart of Brooklyn with a guided tour of the Brooklyn Museum.	Art walk Explore the art scene in the heart of Brooklyn with a guided tour of the Brooklyn Museum.	Art walk Explore the art scene in the heart of Brooklyn with a guided tour of the Brooklyn Museum.	Art walk Explore the art scene in the heart of Brooklyn with a guided tour of the Brooklyn Museum.

NINE DAYS IN BROOKLYN

Brooklyn's best picks for things to do in the coming week — and two extra days for good measure! Our expanded calendar of events **BEGINS ON PAGE 2**.



Grand fireworks

Fireworks lit up the night sky over Grand Army Plaza on New Year's Eve, ushering in 2007 in spectacular Brooklyn style. The display, visible here over the Memorial Arch, began after the traditional countdown by Borough President Markowitz. Afterwards, runners set out on the annual "fun run" in Prospect Park. Markowitz was not among them.

Brooklyn to Ford: Miss you

Our 38th president, Gerald Ford, lived in infamy in the minds of some New Yorkers, thanks not only to the famed *Daily News* headline, "Ford to City: Drop Dead," but his pardon of Watergate fiend Richard Nixon. Nevertheless, his death on Dec. 26 at age 93 unleashed more than a small amount of sympathy for the accidental president. Here are two ways in which Brooklyn mourned.

He lost a pen pal

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

No Brooklynite is mourning the death of President Gerald Ford quite like the borough's letter-writer-in-chief, Louis Schlamowitz, who had been exchanging missives with Ford since the 1970s.

Not that Schlamowitz is particularly enamored of Ford. Over the course of 50 years, Schlamowitz has sent notes to — and received responses from — every bold-faced politico from here to Afghanistan.

Call it an obsession, but Schlamowitz has posted thousands of birthday cards, anniversary cards, get-well wishes, and congratulatory notes to the likes of Fidel Castro and John F. Kennedy, Dick Cheney and Nancy Pelosi, Jimmy Carter and Ayatollah Khomeini — plus every astronaut who has traveled to space.

Indeed, corresponding with Schlamowitz is probably the only thing Mummah Qaddafi and Bill Clinton have in common.

Schlamowitz has preserved a half-century of epistolary history in 60 albums, which are piled high in a hallway closet in Canarsie's Bayview projects.

One of those albums is devoted to government officials who've broken the law. And each recent president, including the late great 38th, has his own album.

"President Ford returned to Congress [in 1970], and I wrote him, 'I'd like to add your picture to my collection,'" said Schlamowitz.

Flipping through the Ford album, he pointed to a Ford family Christmas card from a couple of years back, the ex-president looking miles away from his deathbed.

There were dozens of such exchanges



Louis Schlamowitz shows off his book of photos and letters that he received from President Gerald Ford over the years.

and autographed photos, in addition to letters from First Lady Betty Ford, complete with her rounded, girlish signature.

"The last time I wrote him was when he went to the hospital — I wished him well," said Schlamowitz, 76. "He was a really good pen pal."

Schlamowitz described the ex-prez as "a great, very warm, sweet individual." But it's hard to gauge Schlamowitz's true feelings, given that he often has to cloak his actual opinions to add to his collection.

"Not all of my pen pals are friendly," said Schlamowitz. "I use diplomacy on some of them. That's how I get my letters."

Still, Schlamowitz has yet to coax a response from Kim Jong Il, the North Korean dictator.

A lifelong Canarsie resident and former flower arranger, he began his letter-writing career when he was stationed in Yung Dung Po, Korea in 1953. He had just one

Christmas card left, and he asked his friend what he should do with it.

"My friend said, 'Send it to Harry Truman,'" So, as an experiment, Schlamowitz sent Truman a letter, and got a response on January 1, 1954. The rest is history (not Truman's, but Schlamowitz's).

Over the years, Schlamowitz has been visited by FBI agents, and most recently, officials from Homeland Security eager to discuss his "relationships" with government officials, and his "motivations" for writing.

"I said, 'I have no motivations. This is just a hobby!'" he said. "It's what keeps me going."

Regardless of the obstacles, Schlamowitz showed no signs of giving up his hobby last week, as he headed to the lobby to retrieve his mail.

Sure enough, there was an envelope bearing a signed photo of embattled Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno.

For him, bell tolls in Ridge

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

Gerald Ford is best known for his "only." He remains the only president who was elected neither vice president nor president.

But he was also an "only" in another way: Ford remains, astonishingly, the only president who was an Eagle Scout.

And that, more even than Ford's 900-day presidency, explains why Robert Buono spent a part of Saturday morning ringing the 305-year-old bell (right) at Bensonhurst's historic New Utrecht Reformed Church in honor of Jerry Ford.

"The church has rung the bell to mark the death of every president since Washington, so obviously, we were going to ring it for Ford, too," said Buono, who is not only president of the Friends of Historic New Utrecht, but also chairman of the Brooklyn chapter of the National Eagle Scout Association.

"But the fact that he was our only Eagle Scout president made it even more important to me."

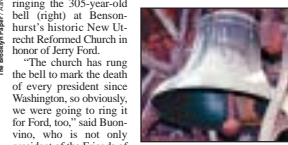
On Saturday, Buono used the funeral chapter, which makes a lower, more mournful "yong" than the standard clapper, and sounded the tone 38 times, pausing 10 seconds between claps.

It's the first time the bell — which has tolled for every late president since Washington died in 1799 — had been rung since the death of Ronald Reagan in June 2004.

The tolling for Washington was more appropriate than for all the other late great leaders of the free world, it turns out. Though the church dates back to 1677, Washington was the only president to ever visit, which he did in 1790.

"At the time, there was a school on the church grounds," Buono said. "And he visited and had supper at an inn across the street."

"All the students were told to put on their Sunday bests — and Washington shook everyone's hand."



The Brooklyn Paper's Gersh Kuntzman

Police Blotter, p 4 • Editorial, p 11 • Checkin' in with... p 6

100 Wine Tips

A Wine Lover's Resolutions for the New Year

By Darrin Siegfried

I've learned that most (alright, all) of the resolutions that we make for the coming New Year that set the bar too high will fail... and yet, there ARE things that I want to change. My solution in this year's resolutions will be ones that I can keep, and that will have a built-in incentive. Here's my list, so far.

1) Drink more Bordeaux! It never fails that when I open a bottle of Bordeaux, I ask myself "Why don't I drink more Bordeaux?" The balance, the complexity, the combination of fruit, floral and earthy, the way they march with foods... I will drink more Bordeaux!

2) Stop holding on to so much wine. How many times have I picked up a bottle and then returned it to the shelf, thinking "Oh, it's just a simple meal. I'll save this for some better time" and then, years later when I open that bottle find that it is long past its prime. It's not just the money, it's the lost pleasure that I mourn when this happens. There is no better time than now there is no sweeter day than this. Open up those bottles and drink them. Your heirs will not enjoy the wine nearly as much as you will!

3) Always use the "good" wine glasses. Years ago, I had a friend who used the finest antique china, silver and crystal, as well as a linen napkin, for every meal that he ate at home. Even if he was alone having a sandwich, he used only the best, saying that he deserved it at least as much as any of his guests did. He was right. From the simple, slightly chilled Beaujolais poured after work while I prepare dinner to the glass of Sherry while the sun sets on a day-off, every glass of wine this year will be drunk from good stemware. Every wine tastes better in a proper glass, so why not?

4) Always have a bottle of dessert wine open... and drink them! Porto, Sherry, Madeira, Sauternes, Muscat, etc. Wine, like Wine, Late Harvest Wines... the world is a wonderful place partly because of these almost magical wines, and it's a shame that most of us enjoy them so rarely. In the middle of the afternoon as a pick-me-up, instead of a cup of afternoon tea, after work while reading the mail, after dinner instead of dessert, after dinner WITH dessert, as a snack with a piece of cheese, while watching the news, before bed... there are dozens of acceptable excuses for having a sip of a sweet, delicious dessert wine, aren't there? They taste so delicious that they seem a bit like forbidden fruit. After all, don't we deserve it?

5) Once a month, I will splurge on a bottle of wine. I always say that there are wines for every day, wines for Sunday dinner and wines for special occasions. This year, I will have a

"special occasion" wine at least once each month... as well as something to go with it. No "occasion" to celebrate? Having a really good bottle of wine with someone special is a special occasion. Life is too short, enjoy it!

6) Pop open some bubbly! While there really is nothing quite like Champagne, there are plenty of other sparkling wines that are truly delicious... and bubbly makes every get-together seem like a party, doesn't it? Sunday morning breakfast with a glass of Prosecco seems like a mini-vacation, and opening a half bottle of Cuvée for just the two of you as you're getting dressed to go out makes the night feel like it's right out of a movie. Champagne and sparkling wines are often neglected as accompaniments for meals, yet there are few wines that go better with shellfish, white-fleshed fish and chicken. There are few things on this good earth that bring as many smiles as a glass of bubbly, and I promise myself to enjoy more of it.

7) Once Spring arrives, let's break out the Rosé! Dry rosé wines from the south of France, from Italy and from Spain (along with those from the rare few American wine makers who understand that pink does NOT equal sweet) are wonderful, refreshing wines that not only are perfect for picnics, but make the meals you serve with them feel as if you're on a picnic. Once the weather turns warm and we begin to eat lighter fare, rosés are just right!

8) I will introduce more people to the joys of Beaujolais. They have a saying in the birosos of Paris: "When in doubt, choose Beaujolais," and with good reason. Beaujolais tastes good, compliments almost every dish, and is so affordable. The Cru of Beaujolais represent enormous value for their price, and deserve more recognition. Another place you simply cannot be a wine snob with a glass of Beaujolais in your hand.

9) Organize my cellar. I'm afraid that even Oscar Madison would cringe at the sight of my cluttered wine collection, and this year I will organize it. Simple shelves and index cards will do if you have a few cases on hand, but I've gone way beyond that point. There is wonderful software available, including some free web-based, that will help you to remember what you have on hand, and what needs to be drunk up before it goes "over the hill," which is why I've had to make resolution #2.

I want to wish you, your family and your friends a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year, filled with all good times and all good things, from me and from all of us at Red White & Bubbly. I look forward to seeing you in 2007!



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(bet. Union & President) PARK SLOPE

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SATURDAY

January 6

Birthday bounty

Don't bring gifts for the 35th birthday of Brooklyn Heights' Jon Quinn. But do come to his party — featuring DJ Chris Powers (above) — with checks for New York Coalition for the Homeless.

8 p.m. Magnetic Field (97 Atlantic Ave. at Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights). Suggested donation: \$10. Call (718) 834-0069 or visit www.magneticbrooklyn.com for information.

SUNDAY

January 7

Justin time

The preschool set has already danced along to his videos on Noggin, and now they can see their favorite musician, Justin Roberts (below), in the flesh, courtesy of Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts.

2 p.m. Walt Whitman Theatre 2000 Campus Rd. at Hillside Place in Midwood. Tickets: \$12. Call (718) 951-4500 or visit www.brooklyncenter-online.org for information.

MONDAY

January 8

Art writer reads

Love art? Love New York? Then head for the Y in Park Slope to hear Long Island University art professor Cynthia Marz Dantzi read from her book, "100 New York Painters," a just-published compendium of artists who trained in, showed in, lived in, or just have some connection to Gotham. Dantzi's book is a whirlwind tour accompanied by a generation of artists including Chuck Close and George Tooker — who looked to NYC for inspiration.

7:30 p.m. Prospect Park YMCA (357 Ninth St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope). Free. Call (718) 599-0960 for information.

THURSDAY

January 11

'Murmur' producer surfaces

R.E.M. producer and former Let's Active frontman, Mitch Easter will support the release of his first solo album in 18 years, "Dynamics," with this gig. Brooklynites get to hear it before those saps in Manhattan have to shell out 18 bucks at the Bowery Ballroom on Saturday.

For more Brooklyn Nightlife options, see our listings on page 10. See story on front page.

6:30 p.m. BAMcafe (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Atlantic Place in Fort Greene). Tickets: \$45. Call (718) 636-4100 or visit www.bam.org for information.

FRIDAY

January 12

Literary feast

The third year of "Eat, Drink & Be Literary" — a series of dinners and food-for-thought chats — kicks off at the Brooklyn Academy of Music with the aptly named novelist Francine Prose (above). See story on front page.

8 p.m. Magnetic Field (97 Atlantic Ave. at Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights). Admission: \$10. Call (718) 834-0069 or visit www.magneticbrooklyn.com for information.

WINE DAYS IN BROOKLYN

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Joy

SAT, JAN 6

OUTDOORS & TOURS

BIRDING: Set Marsh Nature Center hosts an exploration of its marsh. Learn about the migrants who claim the marsh as their home in the winter. 8 a.m. 5302 Ave. U. (718) 421-2021. Free.

MULCHFEST 2007: Bring your holiday tree — without decorations — to Prospect Park, and help recyclers turn it into mulch. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Prospect Park, enter at any park entrance. At Third Street, you can watch your tree go into the chipper and take home some mulch for your garden. Other locations include Fort Greene and Washington Park and Wiloughby Street and Amazing Garden Carroll and Columbia streets. (718) 965-8979. Free.

WALKING TOUR: Mauricio Lorence hosts a tour of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. 5:25 p.m. to 7 p.m. Marriott Hotel, 533 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

PERFORMANCE

HAIKON MUSIC: La Troupe Makedon! presents "Carnival Dawn," a performance that marks the transition from winter to spring to pre-spring. \$15, \$10 students and seniors, \$5 ages 12 and younger. 8 p.m. South Oxford Space, 138 S. Oxford St. (718) 525-5252.

HERE WE GO: Polybe & Seats presents "Here We Go: 365 Days 365 Plays, Week 8." \$5 suggested donation. 8 p.m. Brooklyn Kitchen, 616 Lorimer St. (212) 967-7555.

CHILDREN

DANCE: MC Dance invites kids ages 3 and up to classes in hip-hop, ballet, tap, African and more. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Solomon Presbyterian Church, 260 Jefferson Ave. Call for info. (646) 246-7521.

FAMILY DANCE: Brooklyn Arts Exchange begins winter classes for babies and toddlers, 10:15 a.m. to 11 a.m. 421 91st Ave. Call for fee info. (718) 832-0011.

ART MAKING: Brooklyn Museum hosts "Any Age." Explore the galleries, enjoy a family activity and create art based on "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." Appropriate for ages 4 to 7. 5:30 adults, free for kids ages 2 and younger. 11 a.m. to noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

BLOOMING BABIES: Tiny tots are invited to learn about baby animals. Appropriate for ages 18 months to 2 years. 5:45 a.m. free for members. 11 a.m. to noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

TWEENS ROCK: Library Heights Tap Room invites kids to a Care Bears on Fire show. All ages welcome. 2:30 p.m. 34 Van Dyke St. (718) 246-8002. Free.

COLONIAL CRAFTS: Leftists Historic House hosts an arts and crafts session. 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Children's Corner, inside the park's Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard. (718) 789-2822. Free.

OTHER

FIRST SATURDAY: at the Brooklyn Museum. Learn to walk with Stepping Out Dance Studio. Film, gallery talks, family art-making, and live music. Family movie is "Muppets Take Manhattan" (1984). Classic rock film is "The Naked City" (1948). 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 638-5000. Free.

EAT FOR ENERGY: Nutrition support for the active mover, hosted by the Pilates Garage. Lecture helps participants understand the science of eating, avoid negative effect of sugar and enjoy the positive effect of fat. 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. 291 Eighth St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues. (718) 768-1235.

EVERYONE'S A CRITIC: Watch their performances and offer your feedback at the Brooklyn Arts Exchange's "First Weekends New Performance and Discussion Series" on Jan. 12 and 13.

ORIENTATION: Sheepsherd Parents Without Partners hosts a singles event. 8 p.m. Restaurant on Nostrand Avenue and Avenue U. Kids welcome. Reservations necessary. (718) 790-6040.

PROSPECT PARK LIGHTS: Holiday lighting installation, with performers representing the best of Brooklyn's diverse ethnic and cultural communities. 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Free hot chocolate and candy sticks. Bartel-Pritchard Circle, Prospect Park.

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CIVIC CALENDAR

MONDAY, JAN 8

Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association: Monthly meeting. On the agenda: Track traffic, 106 First Pl. corner of Court Street, 7:30 p.m. Call (718) 858-4699 for information.

Community Board 6: Monthly executive committee meeting. Cobble Hill Community Meeting Room, 250 Baltic St. (between Court and Clinton streets), 6:30 p.m. Call (718) 643-3027 for information.

Community Board 10: Traffic and transportation committee. Board office, 621 86th St. bet. Fort Hamilton Parkway and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, 7 p.m. Call (718) 745-6627 for information.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 10

Community Board 2: Monthly full-board meeting. Borough Hall Court.

To submit a civic calendar listing, please e-mail newsroom@brooklynpapers.com.

THURSDAY, JAN 11

Community Board 11: Monthly full-board meeting. Holy Family Home (1740 84th St. at New Utrecht Avenue), 7:30 p.m. Call (718) 266-8800 for information.

Community Board 10: Police and public safety committee. Board office, 621 86th St. bet. Fort Hamilton Parkway and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, 7 p.m. Call (718) 745-6627 for information.

THURSDAY, JAN 11

Community Board 11: Monthly full-board meeting. Holy Family Home (1740 84th St. at New Utrecht Avenue), 7:30 p.m. Call (718) 266-8800 for information.

CARNIVAL: La Troupe Makedon! New York's Center for Afro-Haitian Traditional Art presents its closing performance of "Rising Sun." \$15, \$10 students and seniors, \$5 ages 12 and younger. 8 p.m. South Oxford Space, 138 S. Oxford St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues. (718) 525-5252.

SUN, JAN 7

OUTDOORS & TOURS

EARLY WALK: Explore the delights of nature with naturalists from the Prospect Park Audubon Center. 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue. (718) 887-3400. Free.

ICE SKATING: The Williams Rink is open. \$5, \$3 seniors and children, \$5.50 skate rental. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Prospect Park. Access through the Parkside/Ocean avenues entrance or the Lincoln Road/Ocean Avenue entrance. (718) 287-5252.

MULCHFEST 2007: See Sat. Jan. 6. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

PERFORMANCE

CHAMBER MUSIC: Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music presents "Ecco" (East Coast Chamber Orchestra). \$15, \$10 in advance, \$5 students. 3 p.m. The Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 82 S. Oxford St. at Lafayette Avenue. (718) 855-3035.

CHILDREN

FAMILY FUN: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents Justin Roberts and the Not Ready for Naptime Players. \$12. 2 p.m. Walt Whitman Theater at Brooklyn College, one block from the intersection of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues. (718) 951-4500.

OTHER

GALLERY TALK: Brooklyn Museum presents the third installment of the three-part series "Leibovitz gallery talk." Experts in the field of contemporary photography will be leading the session. 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 638-5000. Free.

WRITING WITH CONSTRAINTS: Proteus Gownus hosts a talk on the literary movement to apply mathematical thinking to verbal composition. Learn about writing in the form of algorithms. \$15. 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. 543 Union St. (718) 243-1572.

MEMORIAL: An Ethical Life and Its Legacy: Charles Hovitz, BSE's Ethical Action Council in "These Times." 11 a.m. Also, a memorial at 2 p.m. and a memorial follows. 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2972. Free.

CAPE STEINBOCK: presents the film "Where the Buffalo Roam" (1983) with Bill Murray. 10:30 p.m. 422 Seventh Ave. (718) 369-7776. Free.

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HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR PROGRAM: Enjoy

See 9 DAYS on page 9

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Columbus Park — or Park-ing?



Columbus Park near Borough Hall, which doubles as a private parking lot.

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Years after they turned a neighborhood park into a car park, Brooklyn's Supreme Court judges have agreed to remove some of their vehicles from the greensward's pedestrian pathway.

"The pedestrian path will be restored this spring," said Phil Abramson, a spokesman for the Parks Department, which brokered the agreement to restore some of the car-covered part of what is officially Columbus Park to the agency's so-called Emerald Empire.

But the handover of the path, which on Tuesday was crowded with 12 cars,

hardly represents a complete triumph. The forfeited path sits next to an even larger green-park-turned-car-park on the right and a smaller pathway to the left typically used by Borough President Markowitz's staff, which was occupied by six cars.

"This is a good first step, but it doesn't go nearly far enough," said Judy Stanton, executive director of the Brooklyn Heights Association.

The Association has been clamoring for the return of a real Columbus Park since 1999. At the time, Administrative Court Judge Michael Pesce promised that the parking lot would only be temporary, because the new court building

at 330 Jay St. would accommodate the judges' cars. It did not, however. David Bookstaver, a spokesman for State Courts, insisted that the latest agreement to remove the judges' cars showed that "the good members of the community, we were responsive." But Stanton laughed at that notion.

"I would go back to the truth, that at the time that 330 Jay St. was planned, it was promised by the courts that they [would] take all the cars out of there," she said. "The obligation to get the cars out has been there all along."

Of course, the issue is larger than simply the park-cum-parking lot next to Borough Hall. Nearby, Washington

Street between Tillary and Prospect streets has been taken over by federal court cars. And the triangle at the intersection of Cadman Plaza West and Tillary Street is routinely crowded with the cars of other federal and NYPD officials.

It's all about government arrogance, said Paul White, executive director of Transportation Alternatives.

"They think they have the right to drive or park on park space or pedestrian space," said White. "There's a mindset that somehow they are so important that pedestrians don't matter when they're driving. We feel pedestrian space is sacred in New York."

Clark St. restaurant closes

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

It's "finis" for Palmyra's—the latest eatery to close at the cursed corner of Clark and Hicks streets.

On Tuesday, the restaurant was packed—but not with patrons looking for a hot bowl of pasta fagioli. The visitors were eyeing the restaurant's chafing dishes, leather chairs and pans, all bound for the auction block.

"This is very difficult," said Roger Desmond, the late restaur-

ant's owner, as shoppers milled about him. "My family and I have been here every day for four years."

Palmyra's is the latest in a long line of restaurants that have tried to make a go of it at the bedeviled intersection. Kevin's, Heights Cafe, Lotus and Stubs also failed at the site.

"Palmyra's is only the most recent place to struggle," said Rob

Perris, district manager of Community Board 2.

Desmond attributed the high mortality rate to the restaurant's

cavernous space, the lack of parking, and a streak of bad luck. Six weeks after Desmond opened, the building was struck by lightning.

To implement the necessary repairs, the building, the St. George Tower co-op, put up scaffolding for two years, making the restaurant, on an already obscure corner, even harder to find.

Regardless of the obstacles, the restaurant garnered good reviews. Users of the foodie message board, wwwchowhound.com, lauded the

restaurant, one calling the food "great" but the restaurant "uncomfortably empty."

As the fire sale took place inside, two women showed up for lunch, only to discover a note on the door announcing the establishment's demise.

"This is so sad," said Amy, who was particularly fond of the pizza, but would not give her last name.

"We used to come here, even when we lived upstairs." She shook her head and then walked away.



Palmyra's is the latest casualty of the corner at Hicks and Clark streets in Brooklyn Heights.

DUMBO gets trees, lighting

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

Just in time for the dead of winter—street trees!

The borough's least-green neighborhood—the trendy, but formerly manufacturing-heavy DUMBO—just got nearly two dozen street trees, thanks to the neighborhood (don't say "busi-

ness") improvement district.

"The streetscapes in this neighborhood have been neglected for years, not only due to a lack of trees, but also basic things like sidewalks and sewers," said Tucker Reed, executive director of the DUMBO Improvement District, a local BID in everything but name. "We're just trying to catch up to



the rest of the city."

The trees went in last Friday along Front Street and in nearby Bar and Grill Park (that empty patch on York Street along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway where the Between the Bridges Pub used to be before Shaya Boynegreen put up the Beacon Tower).

Although it took months to get the trees, the Parks Department certainly got them in the ground quickly, barely giving us time to snap the photo above.

Reed said his group isn't stopping with a few good mulches. Next up? Streetlamps.

"The Department of Transportation has done a survey to identify places to install more lighting," he said. "We should get it by spring."

More lighting! Just in time for the later sunsets of summer.

Toddlers get a life lesson

Eric Hurt pleads guilty to stealing \$150K in school funds

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Federal prosecutors have bagged a trusted employee who stole \$150,000 from a Downtown nursery school.

Eric Hurt, a Jersey City resident and former business manager of Montessori Day School on Third Avenue, pleaded guilty on Nov. 28 to stealing the nursery school funds during 2005 and early 2006.

It was yet one more setback for an already beleaguered institution.

As reported in The Brooklyn Paper in

May, the nursery school was squeezed out of its longtime home at the Third Avenue YWCA to make room for affordable housing.

The school responded with plans to purchase its own property on Livingston Street, but those plans fell through thanks to Hurt, who stole the funds Montessori needed to close the deal.

"This was a very sad surprise for most of us," said Amy Sandgrund-Fischer, the co-president of the school board.

Now, rather than expanding, this week the school will divide into two smaller

spaces, one on Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights, and the other on Seventh Avenue in Park Slope.

"We are hoping to stay in these locations at least for the next couple of years," said Sandgrund-Fischer. "It takes considerable time to do fundraising and development work."

The embezzlement only came to light after Hurt was indicted for stealing more than \$100,000 from the Hoboken Housing Authority, where he was an accounting manager between 2001 and 2004.

According to federal prosecutors,

"[Hurt] issued salary and bonus payments to himself well in excess of his authorized salary; made unauthorized wire transfers of money from a school bank account to himself; and used the school's ATM card to make unauthorized withdrawals."

Hurt, 38, is facing 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine at his sentencing in April. He could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, Sandgrund-Fischer, whose own child attends the school, is upbeat. "It's a testament to the school that we survived," she said. "The teachers have done an amazing job."

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No drama over Park Slope humps

On 13th Street, residents happy with new speed impediments

By Nica Lalli
for The Brooklyn Paper

Some love them, some hate them, and some love to hate them — but however you feel, there are two new speed humps on 13th Street, and residents are crowing.

"We have many older people and kids," said 13th Street Block Association President Josefina Fanfeliu. "Between the truck traffic, and the cars racing to Lowe's, Fairway in Red Hook or the Pathmark on Hamilton Avenue, we were concerned. We all remembered those little boys who were killed on Third Avenue, and no one wants that to happen again."

So Fanfeliu and other parents on the block between Fourth and Fifth avenues collected signatures and presented them to Community Board 6 earlier this year. The board quickly — and unanimously — approved the new speed humps, which were installed last month.

It was a surprisingly easy passage for humps that detractors say impede drivers and make them miss a green light.

But that is precisely the point, supporters say. Too many residential blocks in Park Slope are like speedways, as drivers jump off congested Third and Fourth avenues and race their way around traffic. There is a

hump on nearby 14th Street between Sixth and Seventh avenues that is so beloved that it is known locally as "Ann's hump" after someone painted the name Ann on the DOT's "bump" sign.

Fanfeliu confirmed that the 13th Street humps are already working. "Since they went in, we've had less illegal truck traffic, and already people are slowing down."

If not otherwise posted, the speed limit on New York City streets is 30 mph, but almost no one drives that slowly. That's where speed humps come in (they're not speed "bumps," by the way, which can't be used on New York City streets because they can damage cars and motorcycles, according to the Department of Transportation).

Many residents talk about getting one of those old-fashioned safety devices, but not all streets are eligible. They can only be installed on residential streets, except for local bus routes, designated truck routes or snow emergency routes.

To get one, write to the Commissioner of Transportation, 40 Worth St., New York, NY 10013. But you won't stand a chance unless you have the support of the community, "such as a petition of support signed by a majority of the homeowners, residents, businesses, or other organizations ... or a letter of



A new speed hump — longer and flatter than speed "bumps" — has slowed down speeders in Park Slope.

support from a local elected official."

If the DOT thinks the block is eligible, the hump heads to

the local community board for debate. And if the "debate" at Community Board 6 regarding the new humps is any indication,

the asphalt humps usually get approved because no one wants to appear to be supporting speeders.

Nica Lalli is a member of Community Board 6 and voted in favor of the 13th Street speed hump.

Slopers plead for peace

More than 100 Brooklynites gathered in Grand Army Plaza on Tuesday night to mark the death of the 3,000th U.S. soldier in Iraq. Standing near the famed Civil War memorial, protesters held banners with the names of dead soldiers killed in Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003. The vigil, organized by Brooklyn Parents for Peace, was one of more than 200 "Not One More Death, Not One More Dollar" events held nationwide to memorialize the U.S. soldiers and the estimated 600,000 Iraqi civilians killed in the war. President Bush has said he will soon announce a new strategy for winning in Iraq, which may involve sending more troops.

— Christie Rick



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January 15: 2-5pm "Slain Black Men: Dr. MLK, Jr. to Now": BSEC Comedy Forum; guest speaker: Richard Greene, renowned community educator and activist; co-founder Crown Heights Youth Collective

January 21: "Walking Our Talk" Lisl Burns

January 28: "Comedy Ed Reform" Jitu Wessu;
February 10: SAVE THE DATE 7pm Marriage Equality Benefit Pot Luck Valentine's Party; wear past, present, future wedding attire: \$15, bring 3 unused presents to raise funds for BSEC Family program & JustMarriage.org project.

For weekly Friday BSEC Very Good Coffeehouse info see www.bsec.org; 718-768-2972

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Oh, babies!

A Flatbush couple triumphed in the hard-fought race to deliver the city's first baby of 2007, popping out a bouncing boy named Oluwopopo Oluwopemigba at the stroke of midnight at Long Island College Hospital in Cobble Hill. The 6-pound, 10-ounce first-generation Brooklynite, whose name means "prosperity," was born to Mabel John and Shola Karimu, both Nigerian immigrants. The prize? A mother-child photo-op with Borough President Markowitz (photo right) and the admiration of babies all over who were slouching towards New York to be born. Randy Ruiz, left, clocked in five minutes later at Lutheran Medical Center in Sunset Park. Elizabeth Haylie Paris arrived seven hours, 21 minutes after midnight at New York Methodist Hospital in Park Slope.



Word on the Arab 'street'? Shhh...

By Matthew Lysiak
for The Brooklyn Paper

The execution of Saddam Hussein was big news from the Euphrates to YouTube. But along Bay Ridge's heavily Arab-American Fifth Avenue, the death of the tyrant was greeted with silence.

"I won't watch it and I have no other opinion," said a man working at Manix Internet Cafe.

A man working behind the counter at Halal Food Market also insisted he had nothing to say about the death of a man who held Iraq in an iron grip for decades.

"I don't have any opinions and no one in my store has any thoughts on any questions?" he said.

At the Lié Ya Eian Arabic Coffee Shop, located two blocks from the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge, the five men sitting in the back greeted the questions about Saddam's execution with silence — followed by laughter.



Saddam Hussein's last moments, as seen in this grainy Internet image.

"Go ask someone else. We don't have opinions when newspapers are concerned," the owner said.

Of course, everyone had an opinion. But no one, except Haythem Ibrahim, was eager to share it.

Here is how everybody reacted," said Ibrahim, as he pulled on a long hotdog flavored with apple, strawberry and mint at the Meena House Cafe, which is across the street from the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge.

"People used to hate Saddam for what he did. Now they feel sorry for him. They believe he died like a hero. He wasn't shaking. He wasn't scared."

He also claimed that the footage of Saddam's execution — which was playing in what seemed like an infinite loop on the cafe's big-screen TV — will only increase the violence in Iraq.

"When you have a new democracy and you catch a criminal and take him to court and it ends in this fashion, this new democracy becomes a lie," Ibrahim said.

"If he would have been executed by the American troops it wouldn't have been like this."

Ibrahim added that many Muslims took offense

that the execution took place on the Sunni holy day of Id al-Adha, which began on Saturday. It is customary in Iraq not to carry out executions on a religious holiday.

"The [Shia] politicians executed Saddam on this day with the intention of provocation," Ibrahim said.

Ibrahim's candor didn't exactly loosen other tongues at the Meena Cafe. One young Arab-American man who overheard the conversation admitted that, of course, everyone has an opinion. But he said that no one would talk publicly in a neighborhood whose merchants and coffee shops have been spied on by the NYPD since 9-11.

Nonetheless, the man was willing to talk to a reporter — but only to a point.

"What you were told is true, the community did hate Saddam and now we feel pay over how they executed him," he said.

"But do you expect me to give you my name in this climate?"

The year in crime for Ridge, Bensonhurst

The Brooklyn Paper

A new year means a new chance to see whether crime is up or down. Here's how Bay Ridge and Bensonhurst precincts fared for the just-ended calendar year.

The bad news? Murder jumped in Bensonhurst's 62nd Precinct, from just one in 2005 to four last year. While not statistically significant, the uptick in homicide backs a long-term trend. Murder is down more than 40 percent since 2004, 60 percent since 1993 and more than 80 percent since 1990.

The good news? Other crimes dropped:

- Overall, violent crime dropped more than 8 percent between 2005 and 2006.

- There were six rapes last year, compared to 11 the year before.

- There were 30 fewer assaults — a drop from 184 in 2005 to 154 last year.

- Burglaries also dropped, from 579 in 2005 to 457 last year.

- And stolen car reports dropped 10 percent, to 264 last year.

In other bad news:

- Robbery reports increased slightly, from 248 in 2005, to 251 last year.

Overall, violent crime in the 62nd Precinct has essentially been cut in half over the past dozen years. Reports of the seven major violent crime categories have dropped by nearly 20 percent in the past six years, and by two-thirds since 1993.

In Bay Ridge's neighboring

68th Precinct, violent crime dropped more than five percent between 2005 and 2006, slightly below the average for similar Brooklyn South precincts.

The bad news first:

- Murder jumped from one killing in 2005 to two last year.

- And rape reports also rose, from seven in 2005, to nine last year.

The good news wasn't all that good:

- Robbery declined slightly, from 149 in 2005 to 141 last year.

- Assaults fell from 142 to 129 over the same period.

- There were 363 burglaries last year, down from 388 in 2005.

- Grand larcenies remained essentially the same, and 261 cars were reported stolen, 34 fewer than in 2005.

Overall, crime in the 68th

Precinct has declined more than 16 percent since 2001, by more than two-thirds, versus 1993, and over three-quarters in the last 13 years. Murder reports have been cut in half since 1993 and declined 90 percent since 1990. Rape numbers have also

dropped, falling more than two-thirds since 1993, but 56 percent since 1990.

In fact, six of the seven crimes have dropped in the past 13 years. Only grand larceny figures have grown, at 6.5 percent. — Lilo H. Stainton

Vito's bus adjustment requires sprint

By Matthew Lysiak
for The Brooklyn Paper

Be prepared to speed up your pace if you want to take advantage of a change made to speed up your morning commute.

Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge) announced last week that passengers on the B-4 bus will now have an easier time making connections to the R train at 77th Street, thanks to a promise he secured from New York City Transit to have the bus begin its run seven minutes earlier.

But the change may ultimately be meaningless.

The plan calls for the bus, which used to stop at Bay Ridge Parkway and Fort Hamilton Parkway at 6:43 a.m., to now do so at 6:35 a.m. The goal is to have the bus arrive at the 77th Street R train at 6:40 a.m. — two minutes before the scheduled arrival of the R train.

In other words, if both the train and bus were running exactly on time, pas-

sengers would have two minutes to get off the sometimes-crowded bus, walk down one flight of stairs, take out or purchase a Metrocard, go through the turnstile and go down another set of stairs in hopes of making that 6:42 train.

Is it possible? The Brooklyn Paper took a simulated walk from the bus to the train that was clocked at 2 minutes and 2 seconds.

When we purchased a Metrocard, it added another 18 seconds.

In other words, even with Fossella's much-ballyhooped deal with NYC Transit, commuters will either have to run for the train or be prepared to wait for the train they would've gotten all along: the 6:50.

"We cannot wait for the people if they are not on time," said a transit source. "We have a schedule to keep."

A spokeswoman for the Straphangers Campaign, also questioned whether two minutes was enough to get from bus to platform.

"I don't know the layout of that sta-

tion," said Charity Carbine, a field organizer for rider-advocacy group. "But two minutes certainly doesn't seem like a lot of time to get off a bus and board a train."

But Fossella stood by his action.

"When I committed to Manhattan," Fossella said, "nothing was more frustrating than missing my connection."



Pleading for peace

More than 100 Brooklynites gathered in Grand Army Plaza on Tuesday night to mark the death of the 3,000th U.S. soldier in Iraq.

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—Bertha Galloway

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January 6, 2007

Boxing Day beat-down in Heights

By Lilo H. Stainton

A man breaking into a Jeep on Clinton Street turned his violence on a Brooklyn Heights man walking home on Dec. 26, cops said, but still ended up empty-handed.

As the 54-year-old victim neared the corner of Aitken Place around 11:15 pm, he saw two strangers standing near a red Jeep with bags of bottles on their shoulders. A woman stood near the driver's side, and a man peered through the passenger-side window — and suddenly broke the glass.

But instead of focusing on the vehicle, the Boxing Day burglar turned to the passerby and struck him in the jaw with some kind of metal tool. The blow started some serious swelling and sent the victim to his knees. The brute demanded cash, but the victim said no.

That was enough to send the pair fleeing empty-handed. The victim ended up at Long Island College Hospital.

Police are searching for a black man, about 30 years old, 6-foot-1 and 190 pounds. The victim was unable to describe the woman in more detail.

Police are investigating whether the crime was related to another incident on the same corner 15 minutes earlier.

In that case, a couple walking on Livingston Street lost \$150 to an impatient, but armed, thief who fit the same description.

The thug rushed up behind the 25-year-old man and his

POLICE BLOTTER

girlfriend near the corner of Clinton Street just after 11 pm. He grabbed the woman's shoulder, and when the couple turned around, they were face-to-face with a 9mm handgun.

The thief then grabbed the man by the neck, pointed the gun at his head, and insisted, "Give me the money, give me the money."

When the woman began to yell for help, the thief pocketed the cash and told his victims to walk away without looking back.

But when the woman began to yell for help, the thief pocketed the cash and told his victims to walk away without looking back.

Holiday hold-up

Forget about Father Christmas. This visitor wasn't spreading holiday spirit.

In fact, when an armed man dropped by an Atlantic Avenue bodega around 7:15 pm on Christmas Day, he wasn't in a giving mood at all. The thug threatened the counter worker with the handgun, swiped \$200 from the register, and stole any remaining good cheer.

Ceill swipe

Like a date gone bad, the thief stood up his victim.

A fake name and false meeting spot helped a thief elude the victim who tried to track him after he swiped her cellphone on Dec. 27, police said.

The woman was walking along Fulton Street, near Jay Street, around 3 pm when she

realized someone had stolen her phone. When she dialed her digits, the thief answered. He agreed to meet her — and return the phone.

But while the victim arrived at the agreed-upon site, the thief was a no-show.

Bus-stop mug

A quick-seizing thief swiped a woman's wallet as she waited for the bus on Fulton Mall on Dec. 30, police said.

The 29-year-old Fort Greene woman was at a bus stop near Jay Street, around 12:20 pm, when she felt a tiny tug on her shoulder bag. She turned to see a stranger running off with her wallet, which contained her work ID, several credit cards, a New York State driver's license, a \$20 gift card, and a commuter train ticket.

Jewel heist

A jewelry store carrying a bag down Wiloughby Street provided an easy target for a thief on Dec. 29.

Someone swiped the gems from the 42-year-old victim as he neared Bridge Street, around 11:45 am, cops said. The man, whose business is based in Manhattan's 47th Street diamond district, was punched in the neck and stomach by the thief, who dashed away down Wiloughby Street.

Smith St. steal

A thief swiped the purse of a clerk in a discount store on Smith Street on Dec. 29, police said.

The 23-year-old victim briefly put her purse on the counter of the 99-cent store,

near Livingston Street at around 2:30 pm. When she turned around for a moment, it disappeared.

The bag held a signed bank check worth \$500, a pair of credit cards, a New York State ID, a white iPod, a set of house keys and a pre-approved car loan application.

Lincoln debased

What a Christmas gift — for a car thief.

Criminals picked out a Lincoln Navigator from a spot on Bergen Street sometime between 2 am and noon on Christmas Day, police said. The 25-year-old owner, a Vermont woman, left the locked vehicle near Nevins Street. The next day, another car was in its spot.

Bomb hoax

A man who claimed to be armed with a bomb tried to rob a transit clerk inside a subway station on Fulton Street and Washington Avenue on New Year's Eve, police said.

The 29-year-old victim was at her post inside the A/C station at 6:25 am when the brute appeared and asked to borrow a pen and paper. But the request was just a ruse. When the clerk turned to get the items, the man handed her a pre-written note and insisted, "Read this."

"I have a bomb. Give me your money," the cursive script said.

Undeterred, the transit clerk struggled to close the door on the would-be invader. As she did, he became desperate, pleading with her, "Give me something. Give me your wallet."

The clerk told him she had nothing to give. The faux-bomber bolted to the street before transit cops could track him down.

Boxing Day bust

A thief hitting the post-holiday sales on Dec. 26 was arrested when he targeted merchandise worth more than \$1,000 from a department store at the

Atlantic Terminal mall, police said.

Police Officer George Greene of the 88th Precinct nabbed the 43-year-old when he allegedly tried to snag a DVD

See **BLOTTER** on page 13

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By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Paper

A crack binge left a trio of construction-site thieves sitting ducks for police on Dec. 29. Cops arrested two men and a

woman at the Warren Street home of one of the suspects after tracking the three from a burglary on St. Marks Place, between Fourth and Fifth avenues.

The trio — construction workers who appeared familiar with the crime scene — allegedly broke into the office at the job site just before 7 a.m. and busted open the tool locker. The crew helped themselves to power and hand tools valued at several hundred dollars and fled in three different directions, police said.

A 40-year employee who caught sight of the thieves called 911. Police tracked the trio to the Warren Street house, where Police Officer Clinton Philbert of the 78th Precinct arrested them. A search revealed several rocks of crack and drug paraphernalia.

Each member of the crew — a 38-year-old man, a 43-year-old woman, and a 51-year-old man — faces burglary and drug paraphernalia.

The robber wandered into the bank branch, near Garfield Place, at 11:20 a.m., walked up to a 26-year-old teller and handed him a note that read, "Give me the money. I have a gun." He also told the clerk to "be easy."

The teller did his best, loading the cash — an dyc pack and a bag. The thief snatched the cash and bolted from the bank, leaving the note

behind. But just outside the door, the dye pack exploded and colored the bills, rendering them useless to the robber. The thief ditched a stack of bills less than 50 feet from the bank entrance.

Police are looking for a black man in his early 30s, 6-foot-2, 185 pounds, with short hair and a beard, dressed that day in a black coat and a black cap.

Surprise visit
A Baltic Street resident returned home on Dec. 27 to find herself face-to-face with a smooth-talking burglar, police said.

"Hello, how you doing? Long time, I haven't seen you," the prowler said, desperately trying to distract the victim when she returned at 7:15 p.m. to her apartment, near Third Avenue.

The 28-year-old victim realized what was happening — but it was too late. The thief ran off with a load of jewelry and designer clothing valued at nearly \$6,400. As he ran, he advised the victim to just "walk away."

Instead, she counted her losses: a \$1,200 gold tennis bracelet, a diamond ring worth \$3,000, two crucifixes, a wedding band, a pair of men's Timberland pants, a Lacoste sweater and a pair of Ecco jeans.

Police are looking for a white Hispanic man in his mid 40s, 5-foot-11, 220 pounds, with short, dark hair. He was dressed that

POLICE BLOTTER

day in a black overcoat and a blue stocking cap.

Jewelry heist
Burglars walked away with \$6,700 in jewelry from a Union Street apartment during Christmas week — and let the family feline follow them out the door, police said.

The thieves had broken through the front door of the building, which is off Fifth Avenue, sometime between 6 a.m. on Dec. 23 and 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 26. Once inside, they loaded up on a dozen rings, jade necklaces, moonstone pendants, handfuls of bracelets, a piece of pink quartz and a trio of jewelry boxes, and left the way they came.

A neighbor found the kitty wandering the hall that week. When she knocked on the victim's door, she got no answer, but found it unlocked. She slipped the cat back inside and thought little of it — until police came to investigate the crime later that week.

Sick thief
For the victim, it was twice the pain.

A Long Island man became the target of a theft while he was a patient at a Fourth Avenue clinic on Dec. 29, police said.

Someone swiped a suitcase belonging to the 55-year-old victim from the medical offices, at Sixth Street, sometime

around 7 p.m. The bag held \$650 in valuables, including a digital camera, cellphone, a checkbook, driver's license, library card, car keys and \$150.

High-dollar haul
A burglar scored jewelry and electronics valued at more than \$6,650 from a Prospect Park West home vacant for a just over an hour on New Year's Eve, police said.

The thief climbed up the fire escape and came in through the window of the apartment, near Garfield Place, sometime between 6:50 and 8:10 p.m. Once inside, the burglar swiped a Sony Vaino computer, an IBM laptop, a digital camera, a camcorder, several rings, a pair of silver cuff links, and several pairs of earrings.

Smoke out
Someone swiped 300 cartons of cigarettes from a Fourth Avenue gas station closed for the night on Dec. 30, cops said.

Thieves came through the front door of the filling station, near Sackett Street, sometime after 3 p.m. that day, and before 6:50 a.m. on Dec. 31. Once inside, they snipped the padlock on a storage room and loaded up on nearly \$2,000 worth of smokes.

A real pain
Burglars stole \$150 from a sandwich shop on Sixth Avenue in a pre-dawn raid on Dec. 30, police said.

The thieves broke through a screen door at the French bakery, at Ninth Street, between 1 and 6 a.m. when it was time to make the bagels. Once inside,

the burglar grabbed the cash — but ignored the croissants — and bolted out the same door.

Car crimes
Thieves targeted at least three cars parked on Slope streets during the holiday week, two of them Hondas, according to police reports.

• On Dec. 26, between midnight and 8 a.m., someone stole two airbags from the dashboard of a 2006 Honda Accord parked on Carroll Street, near Sixth Avenue. The 56-year-old owner, who lives on the block, found the passenger-side vent window broken and the safety devices — with a \$1,300-plus resale value — had disappeared.

• On Dec. 27, a 2004 Honda Civic parked on President Street, near Eighth Avenue, also lost its front airbags. The owner, a Michigan woman, was visiting a relative on Union Street when thieves broke the rear passenger-side window and sliced open the dashboard.

• On Dec. 29, around 6 p.m., a 33-year-old Manhattan woman had her purse stolen from a car parked in a lot on Second Avenue, between 11th and 12th streets. The thieves caused \$200 in damage, breaking the driver's-side window, to steal the bag, which held charge cards, a driver's license, a hospital pager and a pair of diamond earrings, valued at \$500.

Cell swipe
A teenager lost her lifetime when two thugs stole her cellphone on Dec. 30, police said.

The 16-year-old was walking on Atlantic Avenue, near Fifth Avenue, heading toward a shopping mall around 4:30 p.m., when the two thieves walked up. One restrained her as the other punched her, and then grabbed the cell from her waistband. The brutes ran off on Atlantic Avenue with the phone, leaving her stranded for Brooklyn Hospital with a swollen lip.

The victim told cops that one of the two thieves was a black man, 5-foot-8, dressed in a black ski jacket.

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Year in crime

The Brooklyn Paper

A new year means a new chance to see whether crime is up or down. Here's how Park Slope's 78th Precinct fared for the just-ended calendar year.

Statistically speaking, there were the same number of murders — three — last year compared to the previous year. But that's only because the NYPD changed the way it calculates murders, classifying a death as a homicide if the person died within the calendar year, even if the crime occurred years earlier.

That change had an immediate impact in the Slope, where one of the 2006 murder "victims" finally succumbed to wounds he sustained in a shootout 13 years-ago, police said.

Overall, crime declined more than five percent in the 78th Precinct last year.

The area showed steep declines in some crime categories:

- There were three rapes in 2005.
- Robbery reports fell 20 percent, to 191 in 2006.
- Car thefts fell 25 percent, to 138.

But several other categories saw increases:

- There was a 28-percent hike in assaults, to 96 reports.
- And there were statistically significant up-ticks in burglary and larceny.

Overall, crime continues to fall in the 78th Precinct at a rate that mirrors the city in general. Since 2001, the area has seen violent crime drop nearly 19 percent, and nearly 70 percent since 1993.

In those 13 years, murders have fallen more than 57 percent, rapes are down a whopping 88 percent, and robbery declined nearly 78 percent. The least-impressive decline, still good at almost 11 percent, was in larceny reports.

—Stainton

LEGAL NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 12th day of December, 2006, bearing Index Number N01020206, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 601 Court, Kings County, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in room 607, grants me the right to Assume the name of: Esther Weinberger aka Esther Weinberger aka Esther Moskowitz. My present name is: 1380 40th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11204. My place of birth is: Brooklyn, New York. My date of birth is: November 30, 1967. (J01)

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—Bertha Calway

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Bank robber drops gun, picks up cash

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Paper

68th Precinct

An armed thief dropped his loaded weapon, but escaped with more than \$2,200 when he robbed a Fifth Avenue bank on Dec. 30, police said.

The thief walked into the savings bank, at Bay Ridge Parkway, at 11:45 a.m., and headed straight to a teller. He handed the 36-year-old clerk a note that simply stated, "I have a gun. Give me your money."

The teller played it safe, handing over \$2,229, and the thief bolted for the door. When a security guard grabbed him and tried to block his escape, the robber bellowed: "I have a gun, I'm gonna shoot you!"

The thief wrenched himself free and failed to live up to his threat. Instead, his loaded 9 mm Luger clattered to the ground as he ran out of the bank and down Bay Ridge Parkway.

Police are now looking for a dark-skinned black man, roughly 30-years-old, 5-foot-11 and 150 pounds, dressed that day in a gray snorkel jacket and blue jeans.

'Stealer' party

What a way to ring in the New Year.

A quick visit by a burglar left a Bay Ridge man without a computer on New Year's Eve, police said.

The prowler dropped by the 50-year-old's home, at the corner of Ridge Boulevard, at around 7:20 a.m., wandered in the front door, snatched up the Dell, and left.

The thief didn't leave any damage and neighbors never saw a thing.

Target Lexus

It was a bad week to be an RX300 on the streets of Bay Ridge.

Thieves ripped the airbags from two Lexus models parked several blocks apart, police said. The safety devices can be illegally resold for up to \$1,000 each.

A 30-year-old New Rochelle woman parked her 2001 sedan on 95th Street, near Third Avenue, at 8 p.m. on Dec. 28. When she returned the next morning, the driver's side window was busted, the steering column damaged and the dashboard slashed open to free the two airbags packed inside.

Between midnight on Dec. 28, and 1 p.m. the following day, the RX300 of an Orange County man suffered a similar fate.

The 42-year-old parked his 2003 sedan on Colonial Road, near 91st Street. When he next saw the vehicle, a passenger-side window was cracked and the two dashboard airbags had been liberated.

C-card scams

Forget the holiday spirit.

A thief rang up more than \$75 in charges on the stolen credit card of a 33-year-old Bay Ridge woman, police said.

The woman, who lives on Fort Hamilton Parkway, told cops that she lost her debit card on Dec. 21. Sure enough, on Dec. 22, a thief charged \$33.90 at a gas station in Queens and \$42.89 at a filling station just over the border in Long Island.

The victim apparently left the card in a taxi and told police she suspects the cabbie is the culprit.

62nd Precinct

Masked thief

Really, the armed robber said it all.

"I don't want to ruin your New Year, (but) give me the money in the register," a gun-toting thief insisted shortly after entering a Kings Highway laundry at 4 a.m. on New Year's Eve, according to police.

After uttering his greeting, the clerk complied, turning over \$200. Then the robber, described as a white man in his

Correction

The Brooklyn Paper

In last week's story about Herbie the Hereford ("Call with a beef on the lam," Dec. 30), we incorrectly referred to the calf's new home. It is the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary, not merely Woodstock Farms. The Brooklyn Papers regrets the error.

LEGAL NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 28th day of December, 2006, bearing Index Number N01081, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at Civil Court, Kings County, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, is now 30 days past its term to Assume the name of: Argelina Vasquez. My present name is Argelina Vasquez. My present address is 2075 Bay Ridge Parkway, 3LD, Brooklyn, NY 11234. My place of birth is Kiev, Ukraine. My date of birth is August 5, 1976.

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Will return next week

62/68 BLOTTER

The gang of four stopped its 17-year-old victim shortly before 3 p.m., as he neared 24th Avenue.

Two of the thugs stepped forward, and one punched him in the face and forced him to the pavement, leaving him with cuts and bruises on his temple and a black eye.

The other aggressor harassed the teen verbally, insisting, "What do you have in your pocket? Give me what you have."

Luckily, two Good Samaritans happened upon the mauler before the attack escalated and drove the teenage thugs away.

Police later picked up two suspects on robbery and assault charges.

Hair-raising

It was the New Year's Eve round-up at a Stillwell Avenue salon.

A trio of thugs posing as customers wandered into the hair and nail shop, at Avenue T, around 7:15 p.m. A woman walked in first to inquire about a manicure, followed by two men.

Once all three were inside, one thug pulled a silver semi-automatic handgun and insisted, "Give us your money and get in the bathroom." The victims

complied, crowding into the restroom, while the thieves ransacked the register.

Despite the violence, the robbers collected only \$50 from the salon and a few extra bucks from terrified customers. No one could describe the thieves to police.

Stop-and-steal

A trio of thugs in a Toyota abducted, beat and robbed a man on Bath Avenue on Dec. 28, police said.

The car pulled up alongside the 34-year-old victim at 11:20 a.m., as he walked near Bay 34th Street. They snatched the victim from the street, pulled him into the stopped car and pummeled him several times in the face.

The thieves rifled his pockets, removed \$400, threw the victim out of the car, and roared

away. The attackers — strangers to the victim — were described as white Hispanic men in their mid-20s.

Early AM mug

A gang of four thugs robbed a man heading home from work on Benson Avenue on Dec. 30, cops said.

The group surrounded the 63-year-old man at the corner of Bay 40th Street, moments after 1 a.m. A man in a red leather jacket pushed him to the ground, punched him in the head and insisted, "Give me your money."

Another thief rifled through his backpack, pulled out his wallet, snatched \$130 and tossed the billfold back, cops said.

The posse dashed down Bay 40th Street, made a right on

86th Street, and disappeared.

Bag snatch

A thief snatched a woman's bag as she walked home along Shore Parkway on Dec. 27, cops said.

The 58-year-old woman stepped off the B1 bus at 86th Street, around 10:30 p.m. As she neared 20th Avenue, a mugger rushed her from behind. The thug grabbed the purse, pushed the victim to the pavement, and dashed down 20th Avenue.

The robber was described only as a white Hispanic man. He escaped with \$30, various credit cards and ID, police said.

Bar brawl

A man suffered several stab wounds after a booze-fueled dispute in a Kings Highway bar on Dec. 29, police said.

A witness saw the 25-year-old victim stumble from the watering hole, at West First Street, around 11 p.m., with many bloody cuts on his body.

The witness also saw two white men in their mid-20s, dressed in black, hooded sweat-shirts, run from the bar.

The pair jumped in a black SUV, which sped east on Kings Highway.

No holiday

A thief cleaned out a Chinese restaurant on 20th Avenue that had been closed for New Year's Eve, police said.

The burglar broke through the side door of the eatery, off 78th Street, sometime after 11 p.m. on Dec. 31.

When workers arrived on New Year's Day, the cash register was short \$200.

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Roger cuts 'Green' for Yards review

Citing racism, lawmaker/breaker blocks grant bucks

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Paper

In a final strike against Atlantic Yards opponents, outgoing Assemblyman Roger Green blocked a promised grant of \$100,000 for an independent review of the project by a coalition of 40 civic groups, citing a racially charged comment made by a lone individual.

Green, who is black, told The Brooklyn Paper that he instructed state officials to remove the allocation from this year's \$112-billion budget after Daniel Goldstein, a spokesman for the anti-Yards group Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn, referred to developer Bruce Ratner as a "white master" in June.

"I was not going to approve any money to any group that included members that had used language that was hurtful to the African-American community," said Green (D-Prospect Heights), who blocked the grant to the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods before his term ended this month.

"Would you give money to a group that included a member

who called a developer in a Jewish neighborhood the 'manager of a concentration camp'?"

Green's decision to block the grant is not without irony. Despite being a strong Atlantic Yards supporter, he was the lawmaker in control of the grant to the CBN, which opposed Atlantic Yards.

In another irony, the CBN was formed in 2005 after Borough President Markowitz — another declared Yards supporter — excluded DDOB from a forum on the controversial state mega-development. Local activists then created a neutral group that could include DDOB

as long as it also included associations with longer records of public service such as the Fifth Avenue Committee and the Pratt Area Community Council.

The result was a lengthy review by outside consultants that found numerous shortcomings with the project's draft environmental impact study and recommended that the state scrap the DEIS and start over.

"We hired experts because outside review was necessary and lacking," said CBN spokesman James Vogel.

"Now we can't pay these professionals, who put many hours of hard work into a full and compre-

hensive review that caught many of [the state's] mistakes."

Vogel said that the entire \$100,000 allocation was slated to go to the consultants.

The state budget typically includes plenty of handouts to civic groups like CBN, though each must be formally requested by a local representative — in this case, Green, who once resigned from office after being convicted of fudging state expense forms — and approved by the legislature.

Goldstein apologized for his "white masters" remark after it became public, but Green was unmoved.

In fact, he spent much of his

last year in office complaining that project opponents exploited racist ideas about the black community.

"These people have consistently used terms like 'Cadillac Benetton Agreement' to describe [the Community Benefits] agreement made [by Ratner] with black leaders," Green told The Brooklyn Paper after Goldstein's gaffe.

"They have used other radicalized language that has hurt the African-American community — and their chances at fighting this project."

But Theresa Urban, a co-chair of the CBN, said Green was blind to the race-baiting

done by his side.

"[People who support the project] have used very foul, very racially charged language," said Urban, who is white. "To bring up one comment and not bring any of the others is very inappropriate."

City Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Prospect Heights), who helped the CBN get \$130,000 in city funding, said Green overreacted to Goldstein's gaffe. James, who is black, acknowledged that there had been concerns in both the Council and the state Assembly about CBN's connection to Goldstein, but said she was ultimately persuaded by the contribu-



Daniel Goldstein



Roger Green

tions CBN made to the public review process.

"Analyzing the 2,000-page environmental impact study is

racially neutral because the project will have adverse impacts on the entire community," James said.

Losing pol Owens doles out advice to Obama

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Paper

Just because you lost the race for your father's Congressional seat doesn't mean you don't have really good political advice to impart.

That truism, apparently,

has encouraged Chris Owens — who remains a private citizen thanks to his fourth-place finish in the race to succeed his father, Major Owens — to send Illinois Sen. Barack Obama a friendly list of tips for winning the presidency.

"So, Barack (we like to use first names, you know), some advice from the peanut gallery" Owens writes on his blog, "Power from Truth."

No disrespect intended, but what business does an almost-Congressman have giving advice to a future president?

"Obama is the hottest political commodity out there, so there is no better time than now to weigh in with an opinion, for whatever it's worth," Owens told The Brooklyn Paper. "As someone who hopes to be involved with media coverage of the Congressional Black Caucus, I want to be part of that mix."

Owens also said he was "moved"

by Obama's writing in the best-selling "The Audacity of Hope," the book that fast-tracked the junior Senator's White House hopes.

Not even Owens thinks Obama is listening to him. "He has no particular reason to listen to me other than the fact that I am based in [Hillary] Clinton's state and I have some understanding of both the black and white progressive communities," Owens said.

So without further ado, Sen. Obama, here are Chris Owens's seven tips for running for president (which we've pared down to five because two actually weren't tips. For the full, 1,800-word missive, see <http://powerfromtruth.blogspot.com/2007/01/barack-obama-should-run-for-president.html>).

"1. Don't miss your Senate votes while you are campaigning."

"2. Be 'the progressive' and consolidate 'the left.' Your position on Iraq has yet to resonate with anyone, let alone the Democratic progressives (after all, you supported Lieberman over Lamont!) You cannot simply compete for Clinton's voters, you need to win all of the [m]. You also do not need Rev. [A]

Sharpton.

"3. Make sure your committee work provides you with as much foreign policy exposure as possible."

"4. Personally call every African-American leader you can — everywhere — and ask for their support now."

"5. A stump speech is an essential part of every campaign [but] please abandon certain stories and humor lines that have been overused."

Who knows? If Obama would only listen to Chris Owens, the White House (or a fourth-place finish) could be his for the taking!

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KIDS THE TEENS SCHOOL CAMP PARENT STYLE MUSIC

Teen Spirit's New Year's IM showed a real lack of IQ

ASIDE FROM THE drunken woman who threw up (and just missed Smartmom) on the A train, Smartmom spent an exceedingly pleasant New Year's Eve drinking champagne and sparkling cider with Hepcat, the Oh So Feisty One and a gaggle of college friends in the West Village.

Just before the midnight hour, her college friends' kids were handed all variety of percussion instruments to make car-shattering noises when the ball dropped.

It was quite a New Year's moment, and Smartmom found herself quite moved by the enthusiastic and raucous celebration by her college friends' children (not that Smartmom was feeling old, you know).

OSFO, who was dubious about attending the party in the first place, had to be dragged away from the festivities at 1:30 a.m. She bonded with a group of girls her age, who were reading the "Guinness Book of World Records" on land.

The train ride home was mostly uneventful except for the aforementioned vomit near-miss, which incited every one on the train to bolt from the car. "I don't feel so good after seeing that," OSFO told Smartmom. "I looked like Progresso Soup." Think pretty thoughts, Smartmom said.

Pretty thoughts. Pink roses. Your Build-A-Bear. Your little Nintendo's face.

Arriving in Brooklyn at 2:30 in the morning, Smartmom cellphone'd Teen Spirit, who had attended a parent-supervised party in Park Slope.

"Should we pick you up?" she asked as they walked past Smiling Pizza and the new Zana cafe.

"No, that's OK," he said. "We're playing with the Wii and we're making me a Mit."

SMARTMOM didn't have a clue about what he meant but she said okay. Then she realized that her son had just told her that he wasn't ready to come home at 2:30 in the morning. And she said okay.

What were things coming to? Had she lost her mind? Was she a fake? The worst parent in Park Slope.

Probably all of the above. But it was New Year's Eve, she thought. What's the big deal?

The ghosts of New Year's past all came rushing back to Smartmom: In 1969, she was 11 and tasted Champagne for the first time. In 1975, she was 17 and she and a friend went to an early showing of Truffaut's "Day for Night," a Rangers game at Madison Square Garden, and a midnight dinner on then-dirty Columbus Avenue.

In both cases, she — and the Republic — survived.

verses & reverses
BY LEON FREILICH

As always, we invited Leon Freilich, the poet laureate of Park Slope, to weigh in with some low-cal verse. Here is this week's poetic offering.

"Oy vey and pass the pastrami"

Passover, the food of choice
All agree is matzah.
Served throughout the holidays
At home and many many spots
— oh!

Handbath, the victory treat's
Lashes soaked in oil.
Frowned upon by matrilinists
But loved by boy and girl.

Purim brings us hamantaschen,
Triangles of prune
With a mix of poppy seed.
Furthering teeth ruin.

Christmas day from New York
City
To the Florida Keys.
Tradition handed down requires
All Jews at Chinese.

So once she got home, Smartmom promptly fell asleep. At 6 a.m., Hepcat woke her up to say that Teen Spirit had never made it back.

SMART mom

By Louise Crawford

"But I spoke to him twice during the night," she told Hepcat. Then she shut up in bed: "No I didn't. I must have been dreaming."

Frantically, she dialed Teen Spirit's cellphone. First, she got his annoying message, the voice of a female friend saying, "Teen Spirit can't come to the phone right now. He's been kidnapped."

Then she panicked really set in. He's dead, Smartmom thought. She imagined him bleeding on Ninth Street. He'd been robbed and killed. She just knew it. My poor baby.

And it's all my fault, she thought. I should have gone and picked him up all those hours ago.

Then she tried ringing on the cellphone. "Hello?" Teen Spirit said groggily.

"New Smartmom felt like killing him. In cold blood. It's moments like these that make her want to keep Teen Spirit in lockdown."

"Why didn't you call?????" she screamed.

I sent you an Instant Message. I didn't want to wake you guys," he said. "Can I go back to sleep? It's 6 in the morning."

"I know it's 6 in the morning, you little jerk. That's why I'm calling you."

SMARTMOM checked Hepcat's cellphone and checked the text message in-box on his phone. There were none.

And he's a liar, too, Smartmom thought.

When Teen Spirit got home on New Year's Day, he swore up and down that he had text-messaged Hepcat. Hepcat checked his phone. Smartmom even checked her phone.

Nada.

Even if they did find the text message, Smartmom wasn't sure if she'd ever let Teen Spirit out of the house again.

A few hours later, Hepcat got the text message on his cellphone. It had taken more than 12 hours to get there.

I guess he did text-message me," Hepcat said. Neither of them knew what to think. Teen Spirit had tried to be considerate by texting rather than calling.

But doesn't he know that his parents don't consider text-messaging a viable form of communication? Doesn't he know — of course he knows! — that his parents are not of that IM generation.

They may be crazy flakes and the worst parents in Park Slope, but they don't believe that text-messaging on New Year's Eve is a way to communicate one's whereabouts.

Got that?

Louise Crawford, a Park Slope resident, also produces the Web site, "Only the blog knows Brooklyn."

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Photography
The basic are of a typical New Year's Eve for the over-18 set is simple: imbibing thousands of fizzy, alcoholic calories, dance a little silly dance, notice a jiggling upper arm or low-or abdomen, and resolve to go to the gym. But few of us make good on those resolutions. So this

Q: What does Jan. 2 at the gym look like?
A: Crowded. It was so jam-packed yesterday that no one could get on the cardio machine the whole time I was there.

Q: How do the new gym converts look? Have they switched over to the Spandex shorts of the fitness-committed yet?
A: Haven't seen too much Spandex yet.

Q: How long does the fitness frenzy usually last?
A: The peak is New Year's and then it gets slower and slower until summer. Summer is when people want to be outside. During the winter everyone wants to get in shape. The average gym membership lasts about three months.

Q: Why do people give up?
A: It's hard work. They aren't getting the results they want, so they quit after two weeks. People look at it like a chore, but you have to look at it as a way of life. You shower, you work out, you brush your teeth, you work out.

Q: Are some people spoiled — like they're willing to work to get it? How do you deal with that?
A: All I can do is tell them what I think the best thing for them is. I can't get on the machine for them.

Q: OK, so if someone really is committed, what do you recommend they do so they don't get frustrated?

Q: 2, 3, 4 or 5 mornings, afternoons or full days

Q: Licensed teachers

Q: Spacious Classrooms

Q: Enriched Curriculum

Q: Caring, loving environment

Q: Indoor Gym facilities

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At your local pizzeria, it's hold the tables!

City goes after eateries over old toilet law

THE BROOKLYN ANGLE By Gersh Kuntzman
TOILETGATE

IWENT INTO MY LOCAL pizzeria the other day and half of it was missing.

The table by the window where my daughter did "the fold" for the first time — gone.

That table near the counter where I had my first garlic knot — gone.

The center table where six kids could eat while their parents played a zone defense at the two surrounding tables — gone, gone and gone.

And you know whom I blame? Those neat freaks at the Department of Health, that's whom.

It seems an overzealous collection, or enforcement officer from the Health Department entered the pizzeria, Roma Pizza, on Seventh Avenue in Park Slope and suddenly noticed that the bathroom was on the other side of the counter.

Any idiot (not my real name) who has a kid knows that the bathroom at Roma Pizza is on the other side of the counter. And any idiot (again, I'm not necessarily talking about myself) who has a kid knows that the counterman to let me go into the kitchen to use the can — and now I can never find a seat at my neighborhood pizzeria!

What kind of crazy law is this? "It's very crazy," said John Cessey, owner of the Soul Spot on Atlantic Avenue in Boerum Hill, another restaurant who got a ticket for having too many seats and a slightly awkward restroom.

"I had 23 seats and the guy



After receiving a ticket from the Health Department, Roma Pizza in Park Slope ripped out half its seats to comply with a law barring public use of a toilet behind the counter.

gives me a ticket for \$400!" Cessey said. "The Health inspector has been coming in here twice a year for three years — and all of a sudden, he gives me a ticket. Yes, my bathroom is in the kitchen, but I always let people use it."

Here is the part of the column where I would typically let the Health Department defend its persecution of New York's hard-working small businesses and explain why 11 restaurants — all in Brooklyn — have gotten these summons since July.

PROBLEM IS, NO ONE in the department wanted to talk on the record. Off the record, they told me that the food-preparation area is simply supposed to be off-limits to the public. That's why there's a

sign in every bathroom reminding employees that they have to wash their hands after using the toilet. The public (OK, this time, I am talking about myself) does not.

But this law is killing me. Maybe I'm not Brooklyn enough, but I don't like to eat a slice standing up, like Tony Manero.

Perhaps I shouldn't complain. The owner of Roma certainly isn't. Sure, he's peeved that he got a ticket, but he told me he's happier now.

"When I had all these seats, people would sit here for hours and order only one slice," he said. "Now, they have to stand, so they eat and they leave."

The whole thing makes me sick to my stomach. If only I could use the bathroom at Roma.

RESOLUTIONS...

Continued from page 1

er is the cost of prescription drugs. I will continue to advocate for the implementation of the death penalty for cop killers. We will build additional senior centers and youth centers and we will expand the education tax credit and provide property tax relief. We will make our community, our city, state and nation a better place to live, work and raise a family.

Letitia James, City Councilwoman, Prospect Heights
As a councilwoman, I am committed to the reduction of the size of Atlantic Yards.

Marty Markowitz, Borough President
I heightened up in 2006, and I am resolved to stay viable in 2007!

Jerry Nadler, Congresswoman, Dyer Heights
As a nation, I hope to see us out of

Iraq in 2007. Personally, one of my resolutions is that, despite what promises to be a busy legislative year, I find the time to do more reading.

Aaron Naparstek, head of the Open Space Coalition
I resolve to fight for less traffic congestion, safer streets, better bicycling, faster buses, cleaner air, a smaller carbon footprint, smarter development and, without question, convincing Brooklyn drivers to stop honking their f---ing horns so much. Also to write about all of it on streetsblog.org. Oh, and to quit drinking so much coffee.

James Oddo, Councilman Bay Ridge
I resolve to train even harder until I weigh 165 pounds, to pass my general contractors licensing bill for one, two- and three-family home builders, and to grin madly each time a line drive screeches past New York Yankee pitcher



The most-common failed resolution: To go to the gym more often.

CHECKIN' IN WITH...
Calvin Washington

The basic are of a typical New Year's Eve for the over-18 set is simple: imbibing thousands of fizzy, alcoholic calories, dance a little silly dance, notice a jiggling upper arm or low-or abdomen, and resolve to go to the gym. But few of us make good on those resolutions. So this

Q: What does Jan. 2 at the gym look like?
A: Crowded. It was so jam-packed yesterday that no one could get on the cardio machine the whole time I was there.

Q: How do the new gym converts look? Have they switched over to the Spandex shorts of the fitness-committed yet?
A: Haven't seen too much Spandex yet.

Q: How long does the fitness frenzy usually last?
A: The peak is New Year's and then it gets slower and slower until summer. Summer is when people want to be outside. During the winter everyone wants to get in shape. The average gym membership lasts about three months.

Q: Why do people give up?
A: It's hard work. They aren't getting the results they want, so they quit after two weeks. People look at it like a chore, but you have to look at it as a way of life. You shower, you work out, you brush your teeth, you work out.

Q: Are some people spoiled — like they're willing to work to get it? How do you deal with that?
A: All I can do is tell them what I think the best thing for them is. I can't get on the machine for them.

Q: OK, so if someone really is committed, what do you recommend they do so they don't get frustrated?

week, reporter Ariella Cohen (who, by the way, hasn't been to her gym since the early days of 2006) checked in with Calvin Washington, a personal trainer at Crunch Fitness in Fort Greene about that perennial and typically short-lived post-Jan. 1 gym rush.

Q: Keep it fresh. Keep changing up your workout. There are so many ways to target different muscles.

Q: Is that newfangled cross-country-skiing-simulation machine actually better for a person than an old-fashioned stationary bike or treadmill?

A: I think you mean the elliptical machine and it is actually a piece of equipment I recommend. It's not as hard on the knees as a treadmill and it makes you work harder than a bike.

Q: Does watching TV while you work out help or hinder?

A: Anything that takes your mind off the workout and makes the time go faster is good. Then again, I don't recommend any TV while doing free weights. You need to really concentrate because you could injure yourself.

Q: Do you recommend snacking on those "fitness cookies" that gyms have recently started to sell alongside the bottled water?

A: It depends on what you want. If you are a person trying to lose weight, I wouldn't suggest eating protein bars. They have a lot of calories and carbs that you probably don't need. If you want to gain body mass and muscle, they can help you do that.

Q: What is the single best advice you would give to a gym newbie trying to make 2007 the year of the ab?

A: It's all about consistency. Pumping up should be a part of your everyday life.

er Mike Mussina's cranium."

Chris Owens, failed Congressional candidate
I resolve to make more music; it's a wonderful way to take on the world!

Rev. Billy (aka Bill Telen)
We will notice when the word "democracy" is made of Gameboy pixels. We will try to catch the impossible irony in mid-air. When a supermodel says "Justice!" through beeping lips and cradles an orphan to make an ad for a sweatshop company. This year, we resolve to keep the smiling logo off Dr. King's tomb by keeping Wal-Mart out of our neighborhood.

Robert Scarno, controversial architect
My New Year's resolution is to be more understanding to community issues.

Tupper Thomas, Prospect Park Alliance
I would like to have a completed design for our new Lakeside Center (to replace the old Wollman rink) ready and reviewed by the community by the end of the year. And I would like to lose 20 pounds while doing it.

Sincha Weinstein, rabbi, Pratt Institute
My New Year's resolution is to put tefillin (Jewish prayer phylacteries) on Gersh Kuntzman!

David Yassky, City Councilman, Brooklyn Heights
Have dinner at home with my family more often.

Dick Zigun, Coney Island Freakmeister
My 2007 resolution is to make sure the Parachute Jump reopens!

— with Gersh Kuntzman and Ariella Cohen

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

January 6, 2007

Classically cool

Quartet takes chamber music out of concert hall and into a club

By Kevin Filipksi
for The Brooklyn Paper

Whenever obituaries are written about the supposed death of classical music, there's always a caveat: if someone — anyone — would figure out a new way to reach potential fans, then perhaps classical music would finally get off life support.

One solution that's always mentioned is reaching new audiences with innovative approaches to live performance: the staid, tried-and-true classical presentations are not for everybody, so why not shake things up by bringing music to them in a way they can appreciate?

The members of the Chiara String Quartet are not just talking about this approach; they are actually doing it. Their upcoming appearance at Williamsburg's Rose Live Music on Tuesday is a perfect example, since it is neither a typical club show nor a typical recital — and that's how the quartet's members want it.

"We've played for a lot of different audiences, which has always been important to us," said the ensemble's violinist, Jonah Sirota, in an exclusive telephone interview with GO Brooklyn. "This is simply great music that speaks to people directly, no matter where it's performed."

The Chiara String Quartet was formed out of a friendship made about a dozen years ago, when violinist Rebecca Fisher and cellist Gregory Beaver met in a summer music camp while in high school. Sirota joined them a couple of years later, and violinist Julie Yoon became the quartet's fourth member in 1999 when all four musicians were attending The Juilliard School.

Since then, the quartet has been mentored by the Juilliard Quartet, founded the Red River Chamber Music Festival — a summer study and performance festival in Grand Forks, N.D., and recently developed a music entrepreneurship program at the University of Nebraska's School of Music in Lincoln, where the members are currently artists-in-residence.

Still, for all that, performing for enthusiastic audiences remains a passion for the group, and this past year saw the beginning of such branching out with the "Chamber Music in Any Chamber" initiative. (The quartet is also performing a classical concert at Merkin Concert Hall in Manhattan on Jan. 11.)

"We play a lot of traditional concerts, and this past summer we went through a period of



MUSIC

The Chiara String Quartet performs at Rose Live Music, 345 Grand St. between Marcy Avenue and Avenue Street in Williamsburg, on Jan. 9 at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$5 at the door. For more information, call (718) 599-0960. The quartet's Jan. 11 at 8 p.m. performance at Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. at Broadway in Manhattan, includes music by Gabriela Lena Frank, Zhou Long, Osvaldo Golpo and Bela Bartok. Tickets are \$25. For more information, call (212) 501-3330.

soul searching," Sirota explains. "We realized we weren't getting to the audiences we'd like to get to, which are those people around our own age. It was amazing the few times we'd done such performances, because the audience fed off our energy onstage and vice versa."

"So we decided it would be a great opportunity to perform in smaller venues [like Grand Street's Rose Live Music], where we're not up

on the pedestal, so to speak, at a classical recital hall. And we won't have to worry if the audience hasn't been 'trained' in what to wear or when to clap, something that is unknown to club audiences."

Among the transformations at the quartet's club show is the evening's program, which, in keeping with the type of concert it will be, is much looser and more free form than usual.

"We mix it up," Sirota says. "It's mostly a combination of stuff we play, including newer, more contemporary classical quartets. It will be a dramatic switch right from the start, going from Mozart to Gabriela Lena Frank [a Peruvian-Jewish composer whom the quartet's members are currently championing with a new recording on their own CD label, New Voice Singles] to Bartok. We love to have such freedom in this setting, because audiences don't come in with predetermined expectations like they do at a classical concert."



In pursuit of youth: The Chiara String Quartet (at left) will perform works by Mozart, Prince (pictured above) at Celebrate Brooklyn last year and more at Grand Street's Rose Live Music on Jan. 9.

Depending on the vibe the musicians are feeling from the audience they're playing for, the evening's works may be shuffled, rearranged or dropped entirely.

"We have a set list for these types of shows, but there is a flexibility for us while we're out there playing," the violinist notes. "We don't really have the freedom to do that in a classical concert."

"We'll even throw the audience a bone and play a cover tune," Sirota continues; when pressed for more details, he admits that it will be a Prince song.

"It's a great feeling when you hear the audience get crazy," he laughs. "Maybe one day they'll do that when we play Beethoven!"

Sirota has his own take on the current debate over the would-be demise of classical music. "Every once in awhile we hear that classical music's dying, but that's not true," he asserts. "There are more concerts and more orchestras and more of an ability to hear this music [in live settings, on recordings, and online]."

"But that flexibility hasn't always been there," he admits. "Since we always want to play challenging music, there has to be a drastic change away from the stiffness and the class distinctions, which I think presenters and performers are finally realizing: since we started doing these shows earlier in the fall, other groups are doing them as well."

Bridging the divide

As strange as it may seem, The Brooklyn Jazz Underground, a newly formed collective of performers from the borough, is coming together for a unique celebration of musical innovation, inspiration and talent. Jan. 11-14... in Manhattan!

"Smalls is a legendary jazz club," said Brooklyn Jazz Underground spokesperson Jason Byrne about their decision to launch on the wrong side of the river. "Besides having great acoustics, the owner of the club allows performers total control. It's all about freedom of expression."

The shows, a combination of performances

by 10 of Brooklyn's independent, underground musicians and their ensembles, are deeply rooted in improvisation and individuality. Many of the artists have worked alongside famous jazz artists including Roy Coltrane, Harry Connick, Jr. and Bill Frisell.

From the Spanish-influenced music of Alex's Cuadrado to the Indo jazz of Sunny Jain, moods and souls will be soothed and energized throughout the festival while instruments of all kinds — strings, percussion, brass and woodwinds — hang it out for an exciting and eclectic mix of rhythms and sounds.

tic mix of rhythms and sounds.

The collective is also celebrating the release of their first annual compilation CD.

"The timing couldn't be more perfect," said Byrne. "It's the New Year, and the newly launched collective is symbolic of new beginnings."

The Brooklyn Jazz Underground Launch Festival will take place Jan. 11-14 at Smalls (183 W. 10th St. at Seventh Avenue South in Manhattan, (212) 929-7565). For more information, visit the Web site www.brooklynjazz.org. — Chiara V. Cowan

ART



Bold strokes

One artist's thwarted attempt to put up his dukes has escalated into a full-blown, one-man-show of power.

Powerful art, that is. Red Hook artist Ed Rosko is being feted with an exhibition all his own — "Solo Flight" — at Prospect Heights' Gallery on Dean now through Feb. 8. Among the works on display are "more than 20 boxers, of the TKO kind," according to curator Peter J. Ketchum.

Among the pugilists on display is the acrylic-on-corrugated panel, "Big Red Boxer" (pictured), which is indeed "big" at 45-inches by 45-inches. The artist told GO Brooklyn that his series of boxers was inspired partly by "a cool image of a Mexican boxer" that he had come across and partly because of an attempt to get into an exercise routine at DUMBO's famous Gleason's Gym.

Rosko said the trainers weren't eager to take him on — as he was unlikely to start winning belts at age 46 — but "it was such a cool testosterone-y experience" that he'd like to donate one of his inspired paintings to the gym's cluttered walls. "So I'll be a part of it."

Whether getting into shape or approaching his art, Rosko clearly relishes a challenge.

Rather than painting on a flat canvas, he frequently paints his big graphics on the unconventional, undulated surfaces of corrugated construction material, which he finds at Home Depot rather than Pearl Paint.

Rosko will be on hand to answer questions about his technique at the Jan. 13 reception at the gallery.

"Solo Flight" is on display now through Feb. 8 at Gallery on Dean (755 Dean St. at Underhill Avenue in Prospect Heights, (718) 638-3326). The reception for the artist will be held Jan. 13, from 4 pm to 7 pm. For more information, visit www.edrosko.net.

— Lisa J. Curtis

SHOPPING



Sofa so good

With more than 170 stores worldwide, Danish furniture retailer Bo Concept has just opened its newest outpost on Front Street in DUMBO.

In-store design consultant Maiko Katayama believes customers will be drawn to the store because "People are looking for a new style to make their homes impressive." With a wide variety of modern wares from the locker-like Volani wall cabinet to smaller accents like vases, pillows and bowls, Bo Concept has all the trappings to furnish the minimalist loft of your dreams.

According to store manager Elaine Lim, the \$799 Zen Sleeper Sofa (pictured), a shape-shifting couch that is shown in purple on the floor, has been the most popular item in stock since the store opened on Dec. 23.

Although the area is not lacking in furniture and design stores, Katayama thinks that Bo Concept will stand out because of the high quality of the furniture and the customer's option to have most pieces custom-made to their specifications.

"We use real woods — not laminates," she says. "It's more durable and beautiful, so it's very different than any other furniture store."

Bo Concept is located at 79 Front St. at Washington Street in DUMBO. For more information, including store hours, call (718) 246-8188 or visit www.boconcept.com. — Adam Rathe



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BROOKLYN

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week:
WILLIAMSBURG

Lodge

318 Grand St. at Havemeyer Street, (718) 486-9400, www.lodgenyc.com (AmEx, MC, Visa)
Entrees: \$5-\$14.

A slope-side feeling abounds at Lodge, which opened in June 2005, thanks to both the warm, hearty fare and the decor that, in another life, gave a ski chalet its charm. "The place looks like an old cabin in the woods," chef manager Peter Cornell. "It has a very genuine feel to it." Executive chef Brendan McCormick's menu features steak-to-you-tis, dishes like the newly added pan-seared salmon (or tolu) with soy-honey glaze, accompanied by grilled lock duck and roasted mashed potatoes, as well as the highly popular turkey meatloaf, served with stuffing and a roasted tomato and onion salad. Desserts are straightforward, like a carrot cake that GO Brooklyn's Tina Barry calls "better than expected," thanks to "fluffy cream cheese icing and a scoop of luscious maple walnut ice cream." Brunch, including tofu scramble and biscuits and gravy, is served on weekends. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Peter Luger Steak House
178 Broadway at Driggs Avenue, (718) 387-7400, www.peterluger.com (Cash only) Entrees: \$7.95-\$36.95.

This legendary Williamsburg steakhouse, at the foot of the bridge, has been rated No. 1 in Zagat's for the last 20 years — and for good reason. New York's best steaks are served here in a German beer hall setting — principally Peter Luger's famous porthouse for two — juicy, tender and delicious. Each USDA Prime dry-aged steak, says co-owner Jody Storch, is personally selected by himself, then marinated or brined. The restaurant serves broiled salmon, lemon sole and lamb chops, but if you've made it this far, go for the steak and their signature German fried potatoes. Unless, of course, you come before 3 p.m. Then you can try one of the best deals in the city — the lunchtime only Luger Burger. (Order it with Muenster and the thick-cut onion. One of the tastiest and quickest around, it starts at just \$8.50. Desserts include apple strudel, pecan pie and chocolate mousse, served with house-made German "schlag" (whipped cream). Oh, and the bar stocks a good selection of beers on tap and makes a mean martini. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Relish

225 Wythe Ave. at North Third Street, (718) 963-4546, www.relish.com (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$9-\$20.

Relish, open since 2002, is housed in a restored 1950s diner complete with a converted, sleek blue and silver dining car. Chef Lou Silver, who trained at the River Cafe, concocts an array of domestic and internationally-inspired dishes in the spirit of New American cuisine. Dinner might start with "harpoon shrimp," asparagus-speared grilled shrimp in lemon Dijon garlic butter sauce, followed by an entree of tuna au poivre served with Yukon Gold mashed potatoes and green beans.

For dessert, Silver recommends the "chocolate marguila," a "chocolate mousse terrine with passion fruit cloud." For brunch, you'll find choices like steak and eggs, crab-cake Benedict or biscuits and gravy; or for extra flavor, scrambled eggs mingled with chorizo chutney and tomatoes and accompanied by homemade merguez sausage. The restaurant boasts an outdoor garden for summer dining. Relish serves lunch and dinner daily, and brunch is served on weekends.

San Loco

160 N. Fourth St. at Driggs Avenue, (718) 218-8479, www.sanloco.com (Cash only) Entrees: \$12-\$55.75.

With three Manhattan locations already up and running, San Loco jumped across the East River in 2006 to give Williamsburg yet another late night dining option with a busy taproom counter and a handful of seats for those who just can't wait till they're home. Open until 5 a.m. on the weekend and 4 a.m. during the week, San Loco serves inexpensive, hearty tacos and burritos as well as soups and salads out of their storefront space. Margaritas are available frozen or on the rocks in a variety of flavors, while red or white sangria and a number of beers are also on the menu. The self-proclaimed

★ = Full review available at www.BrooklynPaper.com
Abbreviation Key: AmEx= American Express, DC= Diner's Club, Disc= Discover Card, MC= MasterCard, Visa= Visa Card



The cobb salad at Lodge.

"essential late-night Mexican spot" also offers free delivery well into the wee hours in case hunger strikes at home. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

S.E.A. Thai Bistro

114 N. Sixth St. at Berry Street, (718) 384-8850, www.seathai.net (MC, Visa) Entrees: \$7-\$14.

Zen meets disco in this Williamsburg eatery, owned by Kanda Wachirabanyong. S.E.A. (South East Asia Thai Bistro, which opened in 2003), offers an aural backdrop of pulsing club music Thursday through Sunday, and center stage, a large pool presided over by a life-size Buddha with a small wooden boat filled with lush floral arrangements floating about his ankles. Two bars serve designer drinks, like their pomegranate mojito or strawberry guava martini, to a clientele of young, hip partyers. Chef Joe Sangwarun's menu, a range of seafood, noodle and curry dishes, includes "drunk man noodles," a mixture of broad noodles, chicken, shrimp and egg in a spicy basil sauce; jumbo shrimp in a clay pot with steamed dumplings. Specials, such as mussels in light, clear lemongrass broth, are offered daily. Manager Wade Schemasattajai says that "the best entree, and most ordered around here, would have to be the past Thai, a rice noodle dish served with scallops, bean sprouts, peanuts, with either chicken or shrimp." Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Union Picnic

577 Union Ave. at North 10th Street, (718) 387-3800 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$6.25-\$10.95.

Owner Suzy O'Brien describes the three-year-old Union Picnic's cuisine in one line: "down-home, dirt-doin', fingerlickin', southern comfort food." After perusing the south-of-the-Mason-Dixon-line selections on the menu, you'll find it hard to disagree: butterflied fried chicken, fried green tomatoes, BBQ ribs, gooey mac 'n' cheese and chicken-fried steak.

If you can't stick around the diner-style dining room and enjoy its kitschy decor, try the "Box Dinner" to go — includes three pieces of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, chicken gravy, colelaw and cornbread for \$9.95. Seafood lovers have a choice of several dishes such as the "blackened catfish supper" with plump cornmeal fried blackened catfish served with French fries and colelaw, or shrimp and blackened catfish po'boy sandwiches. With their liquor license pending, Union Picnic is still BYOB: "bring a sixpack and we'll put it on ice for ya," says co-owner Ed Bode. Or wash the meal down with a sweet tea, and then select from a variety of desserts, such as the maple pecan sweet potato pie, or orange or peach cobbler. Come early to get a crack at the chocolate peanut butter pie, which Bode, like his food, is "as fast as we make it, it's gone." Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Williamsburgh Cafe

170 Wythe Ave. at North Seventh Street, (718) 387-5855, www.williamsburghcafe.com (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$10-\$20.

The atmosphere at Williamsburgh Cafe is "like an old 1900s farmhouse," says owner Steve Oh. With two wood-burning ovens, its polished wooden floors, rustic brick archways and its "garden-like" array of plants. The restaurant, which opened in 2003, offers a raw bar and a range of appetizers, such as fried calamari with sesame seeds and chili orange sauce or squid with strawberry, fresh pea and lettuce salad in lemon tomato dressing. Chef Cortez Dahr serves up entrees like wild white salmon in red wine butter sauce with carrot zucchini. Or try the roasted organic half chicken served with rice, beans and your choice of two sides. Seasonal fruit cobblers are served for dessert. Brunch is served on weekends, from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with live gospel performance on Sundays. Or listen to live jazz and blues musicians on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday evenings. The Williamsburgh Cafe can accommodate private parties of up to 100. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Editor's note: These are a sampling of restaurants in the neighborhood. The list rotates, and it is not comprehensive. For more restaurants, go to www.brooklynpaper.com on the Web. If your restaurant is not listed and you would like it to be, please contact GO Brooklyn Editor Lisa Curtis via e-mail at Curtis@brooklynpaper.com.



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9 DAYS...

Continued from page 2

an afternoon at the movies with Woody Allen's "Radio Days." 1 pm. Refreshments served. Kingsbay YWYWA, 3495 Nostrand Ave. Call for more information. (718) 448-7703. ext. 224.

MANY FACES OF ANGER: Learn the roots of parental anger. Identify the triggers, change patterns, and practice appropriate responses. Five sessions. \$125. \$100 Family First members. 7 pm to 8:30 pm. Families First, 250 Balc St. (718) 237-1862.

TUES, JAN 9

BRILLE CLASS: Learn how to read simple words and phrases. Braille. 10 am to 11 am. Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Parent and Early Education Resource Center, 57 Wiloughby St., third floor. Reservations needed. (718) 522-2122 ext. 343. Free.

SOLO GUITAR CONCERT: Don Witter Jr. performs. 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Brooklyn Public Library's Brooklyn Heights branch, 280 Cadman Plaza West at Tillary Street. (718) 623-7100. Free.

BOOK SIGNING: "The Secret Lives of Men and Women," by author Frank Warren. 7:30 pm. Barnes and Noble, 267 Seventh Ave. (718) 832-9064. Free.

MEETING: AARP Bay Ridge Chapter 3630 meets. 2:30 pm. Community Room of Shore Hill Housing, 9000 Shore Rd. (718) 748-9114.

CHINA STRING QUARTET: performs at The Rose Live Music. \$5. 9 pm to 10 pm. 345 Grand St. between Marcy and Havermayer streets. (718) 599-0960.

WED, JAN 10

WORKSHOP: "Early Literacy and Your Child with Visual Impairments and Other Special Needs." 10 am to 11:30 am. Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Parent and Early Education Resource Center, 57 Wiloughby St., third floor. Reservations needed. (718) 522-2122 ext. 343. Free.

BABIES AND BOOKS: Enjoy books, songs and rhymes with babies, birth to 18 months. 10:30 am. Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

PUBLIC HEARING: Jeremy Lachar, district manager Community Board 7 presides. Agenda includes discussion of an application to permit accessory parking of vehicles on the rooftop of the building located at 211/283 63rd St. 6:30 pm. 4201 Fourth Ave. (718) 854-0003.

THURS, JAN 11

TAX CONFERENCE 2007 IRS Tax Pro Conference: hosted by New York State Society of CPAs in coordination with the IRS and Long Island University. \$115. \$99 for NYSSCPA members includes breakfast and lunch. 8:30 am to 5 pm. Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, 1 University Plaza, room HS 107. (800) 537-3635.

RECEPTION: "The Spirit Hunter, Part 2: The Photos: Connecting to Gods, Spirits and Ancestors." 6 pm to 9 pm. Henry Gregg Gallery, 111 Front St. (718) 408-1090. Free.

MUSICAL CONCERT: hosted by Edward R. Murrow High School's Music Department and Music Institute. This week: Winter Concert features five instrumental ensembles and four vocal groups. \$7. \$5 in advance. 7 pm. 100 Ave. L. (718) 258-9283 ext. 199.

FRI, JAN 12

SIGN LANGUAGE: Learn commonly used sign language phrases. 10 am to 11:30 am. Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Parent and Early Education Resource Center, 57 Wiloughby St., third floor. Reservations needed. (718) 522-2122 ext. 343. Free.

RECEPTION: Village Atlantic Gallery presents the exhibit "Social Justice in America." 10 am to 5 pm. 345 Atlantic Ave. (718) 797-3943. Free.

BASKETBALL CLINIC: The Beacon Program at Seth Low JHS offers free clinic for girls, ages 7 to 13. All skill levels welcome. Learn shooting, defense and ball handling. 7 pm to 8:30 pm. West 11th Street and Avenue P. Call for more information. (718) 934-5032. Free.

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE: Congregation B'nai Abraham presents "The Jewish Guide to Stress Management: Karen Brodsky." Services at 4:45 pm; dinner and lecture at 6 pm. Call for ticket information. 117 Remsen St. (718) 396-4840.

LECTURE: Dr. Sanford Cloud speaks about bias, bigotry and racism after Sabbath services at Union Temple. 8:15 pm. 17 Eastern Pkwy. For more information, call (718) 638-7600.

MUSICAL CONCERT: at Edward R. Murrow High School. Chamber Orchestra performs. 7 pm. See Thurs. 11.

PERFORMANCE & DISCUSSION: at Brooklyn Arts Exchange. 9 pm. See Sat., Jan. 13.

SAT, JAN 13

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

MULCHEST 2007: Bring your holiday tree without decorations to Green-Wood Cemetery and turn it into mulch. 10 am to 2 pm. Fifth Avenue and 25th Street. (718) 748-7300. Also at Green-Wood Cemetery, 25th Street and Fifth Avenue. Call 311. Free.

ICE SKATING: The Wollman Rink is open. \$5. \$3 seniors and children. \$5.50 skate rental. 10 am to 1 pm; 2 pm to 6 pm; 7 pm to 10 pm. Prospect Park. Access through the Parkside/Ocean Avenue entrance or the Lincoln Road/Ocean Avenue entrance. (718) 267-2522.

FORT GREENE PARK: Join the Urban Park Rangers to learn about the key players who brought forth the evolution of Fort Greene Park and the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument. 1 pm. Meet at the Fort Greene Visitor Center, near the Myrtle Ave and Washington Park entrance. (718) 421-2051. Free.

LIST YOUR EVENT...

To list your event in **NINE DAYS IN BROOKLYN**, please give us two weeks notice or more. Send your listing by email: calendar@brooklynpaper.com; by mail: CO Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Paper, 55 Washington St., Suite 624, Brooklyn, NY 11201; or by fax: (718) 834-9278. Listings are free and printed on a space available basis. We regret we cannot take listings over the phone.

WALKING TOUR: Join the Urban Park Rangers for a tour exploring Prospect Park's Winter Wonderland. Discover wildlife and how it survives during the coldest part of the year. 1 pm. Meet at Wollman Rink, Prospect Park. Access through the Parkside/Ocean Avenue entrance or the Lincoln Road/Ocean Avenue entrance. (718) 965-8951. Free.

WALKING TOUR: Mauricio Lorente hosts a tour of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. \$25. 2 pm to 5 pm. Merriott Hotel, 333 Avenue St. (718) 789-0430.

PERFORMANCE: "Dedication or The Stuff of Dreams," by Terence McNally. \$18. \$14 children and seniors. 8 pm. 199 14th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues. (212) 352-3101.

PERFORMANCE & DISCUSSION: Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts its First Weekend series. Dance artist-in-residence Faye Driscoll performs with Barbara Mailer and Amber Sloan. \$15. \$10 members. 8 pm. Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-6218.

MUSIC: Vox Pop presents folk-singer David Rovito and punk rock provocateur Randy Nerve. \$10. \$5 students. 8 pm. 1022 Cateyou Rd. (718) 940-2084.

MUSIC FOR PIANO: New Music Collective performs. \$15. \$10 students and seniors. 8 pm. Brooklyn Gardens Conservatory of Music, 35 Seventh Ave. (718) 522-3300.

SONGS AND SCENES: Comedy "Corrective Lens," a Jewish-themed musical. \$10. 9 pm. Mike's Steakhouse, 72 Clark St. (718) 855-1555.

CHILDREN

FLICKS FOR TOTS: Brooklyn Children's Museum presents animated films. Ages 5 and younger. 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. \$4 adults, free for members. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

ART MAKING: Brooklyn Museum hosts "Arty Facts." Explore the galleries, enjoy a family activity and create art based on "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." Appropriate for ages 4 to 7. 11 am to 2 pm. \$8 adults, free for kids ages 12 and younger and members. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 638-5000.

NY TRANSIT MUSEUM: "Snowed In: The Great Blizzard of 1888." Kids are invited to hear stories about one of the city's largest snowstorms, and its effects on travelers and transportation. Make and take home a wintry city scene in a "snow globe." \$5. \$3 children ages 3 to 17 and senior citizens. Call for time. Corner of Boerum Place and Gold Street. (718) 694-1600.

MOVEMENT CLASS: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch hosts a dance class with members of the Mark Morris Dance Group. Live musical accompaniment. 4 pm. Grand Army Plaza, second floor meeting room. (718) 230-2100. Free.

OTHER

PILATES SEMINAR: "Get Your Buns Ready for Bikini Week." Movement class, hosted by the Pilates Garage. \$35. Noon to 2 pm. 291 Eighth St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues. Reservations necessary. (718) 768-1235.

PUBLIC OPENING: "Solo Flight: The Writings of Ed Red Hook's Ed Rosko." 4 pm to 7 pm. Refreshments served. 750 Dean St. at Underhill Avenue. (718) 638-3326. Free.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: Guest speakers explore African-American experience with urban environmental causes, featuring performances by Drummer, Grove musicians. Noon to 4 pm. Prospect Park, Audubon Center, center at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue. Check www.prospectpark.org for time. Free.

FREEDOM QUILTS: Readings of the story, "Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt." 1 pm to 3 pm. Jeffers Historic House, Prospect Park, Flatbush Avenue at Empire Boulevard. Free.

LAYOUTS AND LIFESTYLES: NYC College of Technology hosts a talk, "Anatomy of a Brownstone." Meet craftspeople who can repair your home's problems. 1 pm to 5 pm. 300 Jay St. (718) 522-1170. Free.

SUN, JAN 14

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

ICE SKATING: The Wollman Rink is open. \$5. \$3 seniors and children. \$5.50 skate rental. 10 am to 1 pm; 2 pm to 6 pm. Prospect Park. Access through the Parkside/Ocean Avenue entrance or the Lincoln Road/Ocean Avenue entrance. (718) 267-2522.

PERFORMANCE: MUSIC: St. Patrick's Church presents "Brooklyn: A Bridge to Music," featuring The Brassody Players. Learn about famous Brooklyn composers and songwriters. \$15. \$10 seniors and children. 3 pm. 97th Street and Fourth Avenue. (718) 738-2600.

CONCERT: "Music at St. Jacobs Central Baptist Church Gospel Choir. The Rev. Bobby Lewis leads. 4 pm. 5406 Fourth Ave. (718) 439-8972. Free.

GALAPAGOS ART SPACE: presents Dance Films Association's 35th annual Dance on Camera Festival. \$10. 7 pm. 70 N. Sixth St. (718) 384-6556.

CHILDREN

NY TRANSIT MUSEUM: See Sat. Jan. 13. 1 pm.

OTHER

SUNDAY PLATFORM: Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture presents "Martin Luther King Life and Legacy." 11 am. 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2972. Free.

HISTORY CLUB: This week's topic: Brooklyn Street. Find out about Brooklyn's "Happy History." 1 pm. Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3502 Ave. U. Call 311. Free.

POP UP BOOKS: Proteus Garage offers a talk on how to make pop-ups that expand from the 2D page to the 3D space. \$30. 3 pm to 5 pm. 543 1st Ave. (718) 243-1572.

FILM LECTURE: Learn about films of World War II and the continuation of lecture series on Hollywood and the Jews. 4 pm. Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, 131 Remsen St. (718) 522-2070. Free.

IF YOU MISS THESE GREAT DEALS DON'T BLAME US

If all the running around over the Holidays has made you want to sit down and put your feet up, then you've come to the right place. Visit your local BoConcept® store now to save 20% on all living chairs - choose from our selection of great designs, which are sure to add that special something to any room.

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St. chair, \$1999 (retail), from \$1599



New chair, \$1999 (retail), from \$1599



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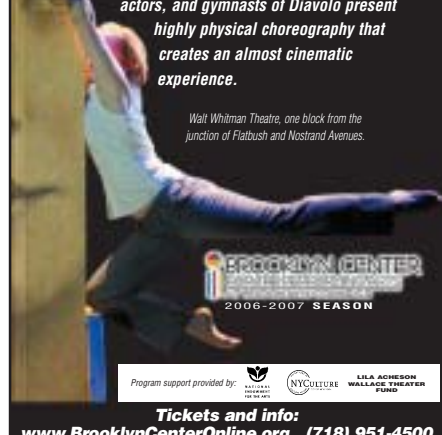
DIAVOLO

Jacques Heim, Artistic Director

Saturday, January 20, 2007 at 8:00 PM

Hailed by the L.A. Times as "the dance bridge to the 21st century," the dancers, actors, and gymnasts of Diavolo present highly physical choreography that creates an almost cinematic experience.

Walt Whitman Theatre, one block from the junction of Flatbush and Nostrand Avenues.



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OUR OPINION

Roger Green's race card

ROGER GREEN, at long last, have you no sense of decency?

The disgraced former Assemblyman — who once had to resign after being convicted of stealing state funds — hit a new low just before leaving office last month with a vendetta-filled move to block funding for an independent review of the massive Atlantic Yards project.

As Green told The Brooklyn Paper this week, he blocked the promised funds for the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods because a single member — Daniel Goldstein of the anti-Yards group Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn — wrote an email to a reporter in which he compared developer Bruce Ratner to a "wealthy white master."

Goldstein immediately apologized, but it wasn't enough for Green, who seized on the email as evidence that white opponents of the project looked down on its black supporters.

Green, a consistent ally of Ratner's mega-development, used Ratner's race-card-filled playbook to

claim that opposition to the project came mostly from white Brooklynites who wanted to deny blacks the "jobs, hoops and housing" that Ratner says he'll lavish on Brooklyn's underprivileged.

But it was Green, not the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods, who played the race card repeatedly during the public approval process for Atlantic Yards.

His most noxious performance was at the main public hearing on Aug. 23:

"I was born in Brooklyn," he said, contempt in his voice. "Some of you have not been in the Fort Greene housing project ... Some people have not even dared to go into Farragut Houses ... And some of us will not be lectured to ... I'm from Brooklyn. I'm from Brooklyn!"

Green slammed opponents for not acting civilly, yet stood by as Ratner allies played race politics, ignoring the fact that Atlantic Yards will actually increase the gentrification that drives out low-income residents and create mostly minimum-wage

jobs that keep them in poverty.

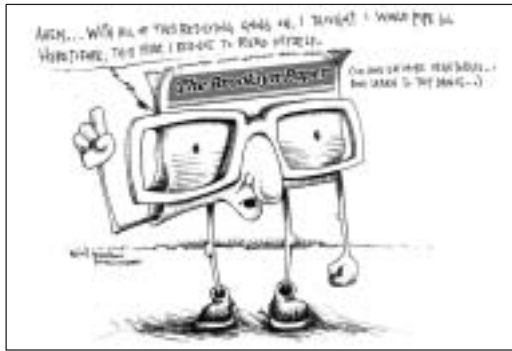
Green is in no position to lecture Daniel Goldstein.

Sadly, it is the poor and less-fortunate who actually will suffer from Green's pettiness.

Because he blocked the CBN grant, the group won't be able to pay the outside experts who did such a good job pointing out genuine flaws in the Atlantic Yards project. If such experts don't get paid for their work, they'll be far less likely to review future developments — and that will only play into the hands of the very developers whom Roger Green complains typically leave the black community behind.

That Green was in a position to block the CBN's already-approved grant speaks to the dysfunction that is Albany's calling card. But the fact that he put pettiness ahead of public policy by actually blocking the grant, speaks to his lack of concern for his own constituents and his ongoing coddling of developers like Bruce Ratner.

ALL DRAWN OUT



LETTERS

Councilman: Indeed, I do have a great bladder

Opting out of home delivery

Every week, we deliver copies of The Brooklyn Paper to homes throughout Brownstone Brooklyn. Our unique system limits deliveries to two papers per building (eliminating the kind of clutter caused by circular and menu delivery services).

We hope everyone appreciates our free home delivery, but realize there are exceptions to every rule.

If you've received The Paper at home and no longer want this free service, you may "opt out" of our delivery program by filling out the online form at BrooklynPaper.com/html/about/optout.html

Send a letter

By mail: Letters Editor, The Brooklyn Paper, 55 Washington St., Brooklyn, NY 11201

By fax: (718) 834-9278.

By email: Letters@BrooklynPaper.com

All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned. The earlier in the week you send your letter, the better.

To the editor,

I write to thank you for awarding me "Bladder of the Year" ("Here's to the winners," Year in review, Dec. 30). Indeed, my bladder deserves this award, as it boldly withstands a daily barrage of coffee that would destroy most other bladders. But even the boldest warriors must find relief at times, and my bladder does quite often, as it must in order to survive the hell that I put through.

The difference between an ordinary bladder and the "Bladder of the Year" is the wherewithal to capitalize on these instances of relief to the fullest extent possible. As you note, my bladder did this brilliantly approximately one year ago, allowing me to support the election of Council Speaker Quinn in spite of my inability to vote for her for religious reasons.

The alternative could have been to do something that I have yet to do at a Council meeting but many of my colleagues do quite often: abstain.

I have given my doctor permission to suspend doctor-patient privilege so that you may discuss with him the science behind my extraordinary bladder.

I look forward to speaking to you about your findings in the near future.

Simcha Felder, Borough Park
The writer is the City Councilman from the 44th district

Ratner hypocrites

To the editor,

As a former Brooklynite, I have watched with a certain bemusement as my former borough cohorts have hunted Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards project. My current distance

from New York City has given me a perspective that, I feel, current residents lack.

Many opponents of Atlantic Yards moved into the borough fairly recently, shelling out \$1 million or more for brownstones and then delighting when coffee bars and restaurants opened that catered to their every need and predilection.

Now, they turn around and accuse Ratner of "gentrifying" Brooklyn. This strikes me as utter hypocrisy.

For a previous generation of Brooklynites, who lived on moderate incomes and couldn't afford \$30 dinners, it was these newcomers who gentrified and ruined Brooklyn.

Is Ratner going to destroy the borough? No more so than the 20- and 30-somethings who've transformed it in recent years.

My suspicion is that these gentrifiers are using Ratner as a scapegoat so they don't have to face the truth that it was they who are most responsible for the changes Ratner now seeks to capitalize on.

Really folks, wherein lies the difference?

Laurence Goodman
Providence, R.I.

Mad Marty

To the editor,

The edited print version of the interview with Borough President Markowitz as compared with the unedited, audio version should be required for Journalism 101 ("Marty's humble opinion," Dec. 30).

In the print version, Marty comes across as somewhat sane and rational. In the audio version, he comes off as a filibustering, defen-

sive, screaming, potty-mouth.

In a sane world, it would be his career ender.

Marty doesn't care about affordable housing like the sincere Saint Stuckey. He wants excitement to come to Brooklyn. He obviously wants a monument to point to in his upcoming mayoral run.

Hey, Marty, Brooklyn has enough spirit and excitement. Try the rock and jazz clubs in the Slope and Bklynburg. Great restaurants are everywhere. Run around Prospect Park. Go to Cyclones games. Stay healthy in the new year and don't get too excited.

Paul Heller, Park Slope

To the editor,

I read your Markowitz interview with great dismay. He obviously remains an unqualified supporter of the Atlantic Yards project despite the well-reasoned objections of numerous city organizations, from the Park Slope Civic Council to the Municipal Arts Society, and many in between.

His support seems to be premised on two very flawed concepts: The first is that Atlantic Yards will foster secondary development along the avenues leading to it — a vision on which he almost waxes poetic in the interview.

This frequently repeated argument fails to acknowledge that such development would happen with any reasonable proposal for site. It is not necessary, and in fact may be counterproductive, to proceed with an oversized, taxpayer-subsidized project when the momentum of private development is already poised to add substantially to the housing supply and development of the borough.

Subsidized sports arenas carry no develop-

ment advantage over the free market and in many cases actually have negative net economic impacts.

His second concept is some sort of quaint and romantic notion of a throwback to Ebbs Field. Unfortunately, the professional sports arenas of today are not the stuff of his nostalgic memories.

If other stadiums in the city are any indication, the children of Brooklyn will not be able to afford seats at the arena — any more than their parents are going to be able to pay for the "affordable housing," if it ever gets built.

I admire Marty Markowitz's civic pride, but I strongly believe it is misplaced. His legacy will not be the return of professional sports to Brooklyn, but a monumental scar in the heart of the city — a testament to political leaders that wanted to mimic Manhattan, but ended up marring Brooklyn at their constituents' substantial expense.

Greg Hopper, Park Slope

To the editor,

Thanks to your recent interview, we can once again be reminded of Marty Markowitz's blatant ignorance and how he does not listen to nor understand his constituents.

If he thinks the concern about Atlantic Yards is based on shadows and light, then he clearly has been sitting in the darkness far longer than anyone thought.

But we will have to just let the next generation of working families explain what was meant by shadows and light when they are living far far away after being kicked out from the high-rise above market-value condos built in Phase I of Messiah Ratner's plan.

Deb Goldstein, Sunset Park

You go, guys

To the editor,

While I don't always agree with the positions taken by The Brooklyn Paper, I think you have done a great public service in your coverage of the Atlantic Yards development.

Until Nicholas Confessore started writing for the New York Times, there was an astonishing lack of discussion of the impact of the development on Brooklyn, especially given the other mega-developments underway at the same time.

Markowitz speaks from both sides of his mouth when he lambastes the Atlantic Yards' critics (a group that includes a great number of his constituents), since he himself has raised concerns about the size of the project, among other things.

Please continue your good work in examining the matters that affect the lives of all Brooklyn residents.

Sarah Flanagan, Park Slope

Talking turkey

To the editor,

During this holiday period when Americans pause to share with others and give thanks to God, how could The Brooklyn Paper publish an article with a recipe of hostility and foreign flavors ("Thanksgiving turkey snuckown," Nov. 18)?

Was it in response to you and yours who hunger for so-called Old World tastes of tyranny and domination?

Linda Settleh, Bay Ridge

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conEdison

'Angel' on the market

Clinton Hill amalgam is yours for \$1.5 mil

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

It's the ultimate fixer-upper.

The owners of Broken Angel have quietly been trying to sell their temple-like Clinton Hill home—even as they raise money for the building's preservation from sympathetic Brooklynites.

"We're asking \$1 million for the building, and \$425,000 for the adjacent lot," said Michael Annunziata, a broker with MasseyKnakal Realty Services who's been working with Broken Angel owner Arthur Wood to sell the building, but also "keep [the sale] out of the limelight," he said.

In fact, rather than posting the building on the real-estate broker's Web site, Annunziata has been personally reaching out to developers he thinks might be interested.

Brownstone, a real-estate blog, broke the news last week. The news that the Downing Street building is on the market shocked those who have been intimately involved in rescuing the hand-built zigzag mansion following a devastating October fire.

The accident sparked a Buildings Department investigation that uncovered myriad code violations and led to Wood's arrest for violating an order to vacate.

"I didn't know they put it on the market," said City Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Fort Greene), who's been representing Wood pro bono in his negotiations with the Department of Buildings.

Thanks in part to James, the agency agreed to allow Wood to re-occupy Broken Angel if the upper levels are taken down and the central stairwell reconstructed.

Students and experts at Pratt Institute have been volunteering their time and expertise to



"Broken Angel" owner and builder Arthur Wood.

save the Woods' unique home.

Wood could not be reached for comment, but James's chief of staff Kate Sussman reached out to Wood and later told The Brooklyn Paper that, "No matter what happens, [the new owners] would probably include room for the couple to continue to live there. Right now, [Wood] is keeping his options open and is considering selling, if that's what it comes down to."

Conceivably, it could come down to Broken Angel coming down.

"It's a development site," said Annunziata. "There's a possibility [that it will be destroyed]."

But Annunziata is hoping to find buyers who would preserve its idiosyncratic shell.

"There's a lot of value in those bricks," he said.



"Broken Angel" at 4 Downing St. in Clinton Hill has so many building code violations its creator has put it up for sale



The Queen Mary 2 cruises into New York Harbor.

A gay old time

Queen Mary 2 welcomes 'queens'

By Christie Rizk

The Brooklyn Paper

Queen Mary 2 is about to host a bunch of queens.

Nearly 3,000 gays and lesbians will turn the world's largest passenger ship into their own Love Boat on May 29, when they embark from Brooklyn on a weeklong voyage across the Atlantic to Southampton, England.

RSVP Vacations, the Minnesota-based company chartering what it calls the first-ever, full-ship chartered gay cruise, has worked with other Cunard Line ships before, but not the Queen.

It's the Queen Mary 2 [to] the jokes about 'queens on the Queen' were going to be made," said James David, spokesman for RSVP. "And I love it!"

The travel agency has been operating gay and lesbian cruises since 1985 because "gays and lesbians wanted a safe environment where they could vacation," David said.

But now that RSVP has helped create the gay tourism industry, "safe" just isn't good enough anymore.

"Gays and lesbians want the best of the best and then some," said David. And the QM2, one of the most opulent ships ever built, is certainly fit for, well, a queen.

The fun doesn't come cheap. Tickets start at \$1,595 per person and climb to \$6,595.

David believes it's worth the price tag, thanks to what he called an "inclusive and diverse" atmosphere.

"It's not just open to one seg-

ment of the lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender population," he said. "Everyone is welcome."

Cunard promised that RSVP's alternatively-lifestyles clients would be treated to the same "world-class" entertainment that other cruise passengers get, including Cunard's traditional Black & White Ball and Acet Ball.

"We are proud to welcome RSVP Vacations aboard our flagship Queen Mary 2," said Cunard spokesman Brian O'Connor.

Straight family members have also been known to travel on RSVP cruises.

And unlike Cuba Gooding Jr. in the 2002 flop, "Boat Trip," they have a gay old time. RSVP's invitation to "cut loose" and "red-free" extends to everyone, David said.

PATH...

Continued from page 1

stalled by the Metrotech BID, will replace the current hodgepodge of dirt and graffiti-covered civic placards that are hard to find and nearly impossible to read.

That's in contrast to Beck's, whose white wood, black-lettered signs remain mostly clean and readable.

She hangs them by herself, sneaking into the park after dark to help hapless tourists who get off the High Street subway and promptly get lost.

In so doing, Beck is flouting Parks Department regulations, not to mention human nature's tendency toward apathy.

"What's so depressing is the Parks Department regularly removes the signs," said Beck, picking at a sticker someone had stuck on a sign at the Cadman Plaza West entrance to the park.

But the Parks Department argues that it only re-

moves Beck's signs when they're damaged.

"We don't intentionally remove the signs," said Phil Abramson, an agency spokesman. "It's just that they are often damaged from the weather."

Beck is quite an unlikely rebel in red hat and matching gloves. The lifelong Brooklynite, who taught at Long Island University for 35 years and officiated at grand-slam tennis tournaments on the side, said she is motivated by nothing but goodwill.

"People should have some information," she said. "You want to be helpful to people."

And helpful she is. Not only does she post signs, but she routinely personally directs tourists to the Promenade, Fulton Ferry, and, of course, the Brooklyn Bridge pathway. In fact, that's exactly what she was doing when we met up with her on Wednesday.

The Metrotech BID has promised that its new signs will be multi-colored and made from "high-quality materials," not scrap lumber like Beck's. They're also promised to maintain them.

"If so, I will relinquish my sign-posting activities as soon as they're put up," Beck added with a laugh.

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Continued from page 4

player and a comforter from the anchor store of the mall, which is at Atlantic and Flatbush avenues.

A 26-year-old employee saw the suspect try to slip the items out of the store without paying, around 1 p.m. But Officer Greene stopped the thief.

Knifeman nabbed

Police arrested a 43-year-old man who used a blade to rob a man on DeKalb Avenue on New Year's Eve.

The 30-year-old victim was walking near Clinton Avenue around 9:45 p.m. when the knifeman rushed up and grabbed his wallet, with \$35 inside. But Police Officer Anthony Barbee chased after the suspect and cuffed him on robbery charges.

Cell swipe

A teenager lost her lifeline when two thugs stole her cellphone on Dec. 30, police said.

The 16-year-old was walking on Atlantic Avenue, near Fifth Avenue, heading toward one of the avenue's shopping malls around 4:30 p.m. when the two thieves walked up. One restrained her as the other punched her, and then grabbed the cell from her waistband. The brutes ran off on Atlantic Avenue with the phone, leaving her destined for Brooklyn Hospital with a swollen lip.

Car crimes

Thieves in Fort Greene burglarized at least five cars and stole another two vehicles outright during Christmas week, police reports show. The vandalism included:

- On Dec. 26, between 5:10 p.m. and 7:45 p.m., a 1997 Ford was burglarized. The 18-year-old owner, a Staten Island woman, parked the vehicle on Washington Avenue, at Park Avenue, and returned to find the passenger-side window cracked open and her iPod, credit cards, bank card, Social Security card and birth certificate missing.

- Later that day, at 10 p.m., a 26-year-old Long Island woman left her 1997 Mazda GTE on Washington Avenue, near Gates Avenue. When she returned two days later, the passenger-side window was broken and a Triton Extreme keyboard, valued at \$2,000, was missing.

- In the early morning of Dec. 27, a Jersey City man parked his BMW 525 on Carlton Avenue, near DeKalb Avenue. The 34-year-old man returned at 11:30 a.m. to find someone had swiped both headlights from the 2001 station wagon.

- On Dec. 28, between noon and 5 p.m., a vehicle was burglarized on Fleet Place and Willoughby Avenue. The 33-year-old driver parked the car and returned to find the driver's-side window broken and his wallet gone. The billfold held bank cards, four department store charge cards, and his Social Security card.

- Sometime after 9 p.m. on Dec. 29, and 8:30 a.m. the following morning, thieves scored jewelry and an iPod from a car parked on Ashland Place, near Willoughby Street.

- On Dec. 29, around 12:30 p.m., a woman snatched the keys to a 1988 Plymouth Sundance from the owner as he was about to open the car, which was parked at the corner of Lefferts Place and Classon Avenue. She jumped in and drove off in the sedan.

2006: The year in crime

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Paper

A new year means a new chance to see whether crime is up or down. Here's how precincts in and around Downtown fared for the just-ended calendar year.

Homicide detectives in Carroll Gardens' and Cobble Hill's 76th Precinct were happily bored, thanks to zero murders in 2006, down from four the year before.

But rapes were up dramatically, from three in 2005 to eight last year.

All other violent crime categories saw decreases, for a total drop in violent crime of 16 percent last year.

- Robberies dropped from 149 in 2005 to 133 last year.

- Assaults dropped from 98 two

years ago to 85.

- Burglaries dropped from 160 in 2005 to 117 last year.

- Grand larceny fell more than 10 percent to 217 last year.

- And 94 cars were stolen in 2006, versus 119 the year before.

Overall, crime has dropped by more than 10 percent in the 76th Precinct in the past six years, and by more than 63 percent since 1993. All seven crime categories have declined in the past 13 years; all but larceny have fallen by double-digits. Rape reports have nearly been cut in half since 1993, and declined 80 percent since 1990.

In the 84th Precinct, which covers Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO, there were two murders in 2006, spilling a perfect zero from 2005. But like Roger Maris' home run record, this statistic

comes with an asterisk: One of the homicide victims was a man who succumbed to gunshot wounds he suffered in 1992, police said.

Overall, violent crime in the precinct dropped 3.5 percent from the year before.

- Rape reports dropped from 10 in 2005 to six last year.

- Robberies fell 12 percent, to 209 in 2006.

- Burglary declined 4.5 percent, to 148 reports last year.

- And car thefts dropped by one-third, to 69.

Besides murder, there were some minor increases:

- Assaults rose from 136 to 141.

- And larceny rose from 633 to 655.

Overall, crime continues to fall in the precinct at a faster rate than elsewhere in

the Brooklyn North patrol. Individually, each crime category has dropped by double-digits over the past five years and between 42 percent (larceny) and 90 percent (car thefts) since 1993.

Together, violent crime in the 84th Precinct has fallen nearly 27 percent since 2001, more than 72 percent since 1993, and by 80.5 percent since 1990. Figures for Brooklyn North show a decline of more than 19 percent in violent crime reports in the past five years, a drop greater than two-thirds since 1993, and a drop of more than 73 percent since 1990.

In Fort Greene's 88th Precinct, murder skyrocketed from a single killing in 2005 to 11 last year. The number mirrors the bloody year 2001 and tipped the Fort Greene precinct toward the double-digit murder rates of

the last decade. Even with last year's increase, murder has declined 56 percent since 1993 and nearly 95 percent since 1990.

Overall, violent crime in the 88th precinct has dropped 8.3 percent over the last year. The highlights:

- Car thefts dropped by 25 percent, to 121.

- Robberies fell nearly 17 percent, to 264.

At the same time, there was a 5.3-percent hike in larceny reports.

Despite the reversal in murder trends, crime in the 88th Precinct continues to decline — at a faster rate than Brooklyn North in general. Reports of violent crime fell nearly 22 percent since 2001 in the Fort Greene area, close to 71 percent since 1993, and 73.5 percent since 1990.



A city plan to transform the Red Hook waterfront is meeting with resistance. Currently, part of the area is used for parking New York Water taxi boats.

Big price tag in Hook

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Paper

Transforming a cargo port on the Red Hook waterfront into a maritime tourist attraction will cost \$326 million, according to an internal city document obtained by The Brooklyn Paper this week.

And that price tag could be the final straw for the controversial plan, officials said this week.

"These are large numbers for a half-baked plan," said City Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights). "This plan is clearly not well-thought out, and the numbers demonstrate that a viable ongoing business shouldn't be kicked out in its service."

The "ongoing business" is the Red Hook Container Port, which the city plans to evict this spring to make way for a hotel and shops, a boat repair facility, a Brooklyn Brewery plant and tourist-friendly beer garden, as well as a smaller industrial port, a ferry connection to Governors Island and a second pier for cruise ships.

The cost of the ambitious project had been unknown until now.

The bulk of its budget — \$230 million — would modernize the piers so they could support new buildings. Opponents say they do not want to see new structures on the waterfront if it means closing the container port, which they believe is important for the city's long-term growth.

At a City Council hearing last month, Kate Ascher, vice president of the city Economic Development Corporation, defended the cost, saying the new mix of industrial and recreational uses would triple the number of jobs along the waterfront while opening it up to residents.

"Under our plan, no existing longshoreman jobs will be lost," she said, repeating the line for emphasis.

The pier plan is part of Mayor Bloomberg's larger vision of a tourist-friendly "Harbor District" of waterfront parks that would connect all the boroughs and Governors Island, just a few hundred feet off the

Red Hook coastline, via ferry connections.

"It is fair to say that EDC is undertaking the most ambitious redevelopment of the Brooklyn waterfront in half a century," Ascher said.

But Yassky's doubts echo concerns that have dogged the agency since the plan was made public last spring. In fact, not one elected official or local resident spoke in support of the plan at the December hearing.

"It is not clear what kind of economic development will be generated," said City Councilwoman Jessica Lappin (D-Manhattan), chair of a Council subcommittee that must approve all uses of waterfront land.

"Once you lose waterfront land [to building], it is gone forever," she said.

Lappin pointed out that the \$60-million Brooklyn cruise ship terminal failed to create as many jobs as the city expected.

Only 10 of the 255 jobs at the terminal are full-time. Nonetheless, the EDC document obtained this week claims that 810 full- and part-time jobs would be created if the \$326-million maritime district expansion becomes a reality.

By comparison, the container terminal supports just 133 full-time jobs, according to the EDC — although American Stevedoring, which operates the port, says it has 623 jobs.

Besides that, neighbors say the cargo port is a considerate neighbor that generates less traffic than a tourist attraction while maintaining the area's historic maritime identity.

"People have come to a remarkable consensus about keeping the working waterfront and, at the same time, adding more open space," said David Lutz, executive director of the Neighborhood Open Space Coalition, who lives on Columbia Street.

"There is plenty of developable land elsewhere," he said.



Oh, babies!

A Flatbush couple triumphed in the hard-fought race to deliver the city's first baby of 2007, popping out a bouncing boy named Oladipupo Oluwagbemiga at the stroke of midnight at Long Island College Hospital in Cobble Hill. The 6-pound, 10-ounce first-generation Brooklynite, whose name means "prosperity," was born to Mabel John and Shola Karimu, both Nigerian immigrants. The prize? A mother-child photo-op with Borough President Markowitz (photo right) and the admiration of babies all over who were slouching towards New York to be born. Randy Ruiz clocked in five minutes later at Lutheran Medical Center in Sunset Park. Elizabeth Haylie Paris (left, with her mom Leslie) arrived seven hours, 21 minutes after midnight at New York Methodist Hospital in Park Slope.



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No 'Toll' on Gowanus

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Paper

The builder that gave the 'burbs a shine with its trademark McMansion isn't ready to get its tools dirty along Brooklyn's Lavender Lake.

Toll Brothers has withdrawn an application for a state-supervised cleanup of a two-block stretch of Bond Street along the Gowanus Canal because an expected residential rezoning of the area hasn't happened yet, a company spokesman told The Brooklyn Paper this week.

"In the end, we applied for the cleanup too early, said spokesman David Von Spreckelsen.

The reason stems from a Catch-22 on the waterfront. Toll Brothers won't buy the site, including its historic, stark cement building, until the city rezones the land for residential use. But the state can't approve a taxpayer-subsidized cleanup until the developer buys the site, which runs along Bond Street from First through Carroll streets.

Von Spreckelsen said the sale would be completed soon and that the company will de-



This historic cement building on First Street along the Gowanus Canal may soon be torn down to make room for a residential development.

velop the industrial site into a canal-front village of mixed-income apartments and townhouses.

The almost-acquisition is the latest in a string of sales to resi-

dential builders expected to transform the grimy Gowanus into an annex of posh Park Slope, just across Fourth Avenue.

The rezoning that Toll Brothers

needs can't move forward without approval from the Department of City Planning—which itself won't move forward until after a series of public hearings that are sure to get

heated in Brooklyn's famously stinky ampt.

News of the Toll's delayed progress pleased neighborhood residents who fear that the canal zone will lose its history to the McMansion builder.

In recent weeks, that fear has coalesced around a mysterious affection for one of the buildings on the Toll site: a concrete warehouse used in the late 19th- and early 20th century to store building materials.

Because the ghost-colored warehouse has been deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Buildings, some believed that it should be spared the wrecking ball.

"It's part of the landscape," said Linda Mariano, a member of Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus.

"It is archeologically sensitive, and we should keep it here."

Community Board 6 will hold a public meeting with the Department of City Planning about the rezoning of the Gowanus Canal area on Jan. 25 at 6 p.m. The meeting will be at St. Mary's Residence (41 First St., at Bond Street). Call (718) 643-3027 for information.



Photo: New York Times/John W. H. Johnson

Toddlers get a life lesson

Eric Hurt pleads guilty to stealing \$150K in school funds

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Federal prosecutors have bagged a trusted employee who stole \$150,000 from a Downtown nursery school.

Eric Hurt, a Jersey City resident and former business manager of Montessori Day School on Third Avenue, pleaded guilty on Nov. 28 to stealing the nursery school funds during 2005 and early 2006.

It was yet one more setback for an already beleaguered institution.

As reported in The Brooklyn Paper in May, the nursery school was squeezed out of its longtime home at the Third Avenue YWCA to make room for affordable housing.

The school responded with plans to purchase its own property on Livingston

Street, but those plans fell through thanks to Hurt, who stole the funds. Montessori needed to close the deal.

"This was a very sad surprise for most of us," said Amy Sandgrund-Fischer, the co-president of the school board. "[Hurt] had been a part of our community for over a year."

Now, rather than expanding, this week the school will divide into two smaller spaces, one on Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights, and the other on Seventh Avenue in Park Slope.

"We are hoping to stay in these locations at least for the next couple of years," said Sandgrund-Fischer. "It takes considerable time to do fundraising and development work."

The embezzlement only came to light after Hurt was indicted for stealing more

than \$100,000 from the Hoboken Housing Authority, where he was an accounting manager between 2001 and 2004.

According to federal prosecutors in New Jersey, which investigated the case, "[Hurt] issued salary and bonus payments to himself well in excess of his authorized salary; made unauthorized wire transfers of money from a school bank account to himself; and used the school's ATM card to make unauthorized withdrawals."

Hurt, 38, is facing 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine at his sentencing in April. He could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, Sandgrund-Fischer, whose own child attends the school, is trying to be upbeat. "While this has definitely been a difficult year, it's a testament to the school that we survived," she said. "We will be at full capacity at both [of our new] locations. The teachers have done an amazing job."

Councilman Felder's 'super-bladder'

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

Oh, babies!

A Flatbush couple triumphed in the hard-fought race to deliver the city's first baby of 2007, popping out a bouncing boy named Oladipupo Oluwagbemiga at the stroke of midnight at Long Island College Hospital in Cobble Hill. The 6-pound, 10-ounce first-generation Brooklynite, whose name means "prosperity," was born to Mabel John and Shola Karimu, both Nigerian immigrants. The proof? A mother-child photo-op with Borough President Markowitz (photo right) and the admiration of babies all over who were slouching towards New York to be born. Randy Ruiz clocked in five minutes later at Lutheran Medical Center in Sunset Park. Elizabeth Haylie Paris (above, with her mom Leslie) arrived seven hours, 21 minutes after midnight at New York Methodist Hospital in Park Slope.



Photo: New York Times/John W. H. Johnson



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Recycling Tips for the Holidays!

After all the gifts have been opened, here are some tips to reduce New York City's waste:

Recycle your holiday cards and promotional mail

This time of year, we get inundated with mail and catalogs. When you're done with these, recycle them with your mixed paper and cardboard. Do this year round with all unwanted mail!

Recycle paper gift wrap and cardboard boxes

Paper gift wrap and cardboard tubes are recyclable. So are the cardboard boxes that held your presents. Recycle these along with your other mixed paper and cardboard.



Recycle your tree!

Remove all lights, ornaments, stands and plastic bags.

Trees with lights and tinsel can't be composted and will be collected as trash.



Sanitation Collection: Friday, January 5 thru Tuesday, January 16

The Department of Sanitation will collect **clean** Christmas trees left at the curb on the dates shown above.

Clean trees are chipped, mixed with fall leaves, and recycled into rich compost for NYC's parks, community gardens and residents like you!

MulchFest: Saturday and Sunday, January 6 & 7 10 am - 2 pm

Bring your **clean** Christmas tree to designated parks, where it can be chipped into mulch. Bring a bag if you want to take away mulch for your own use.

For MulchFest locations, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/parks.



Check the **Compost Project** website for upcoming workshops and events: www.nyccompost.org



City of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Department of Sanitation, John J. Doherty, Commissioner
Call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/sanitation

